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ABSTRACT

In a second edition, this book reports on the Aquinas College, a Catholic, coeducational, liberal arts college in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The original text on the steps taken by the college to remain viable during the difficult circumstances of the seventies is supplemented by an epilogue in which the results of the Aquinas College reassessment of its mission, role, and scope and subsequent initiatives are discussed. The college initially focused on its heritage, continuing strengths, and aspirations and later sought to achieve its aspirations in view of conditions prevailing in the external environment. It is concluded that the self-study resulted in new ideas for institutional development, and the overall process became a vehicle for implementation of a number of programs and development of an accreditation report. Every faculty member was assigned to one of five study groups, and each group had three student members. Study-group members visited other campuses and took part in campus-wide retreats to compare recommendations. It is claimed that the institution's new continuing education mission was implemented with a minimal amount of disruption because of effective internal communications. (SW)

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A Survival Kit For Invisible Colleges

Second Edition

by Norbert J. Hruby, Aquinas College

with a Foreword and Epilogue by
J. Kent Caruthers

1980

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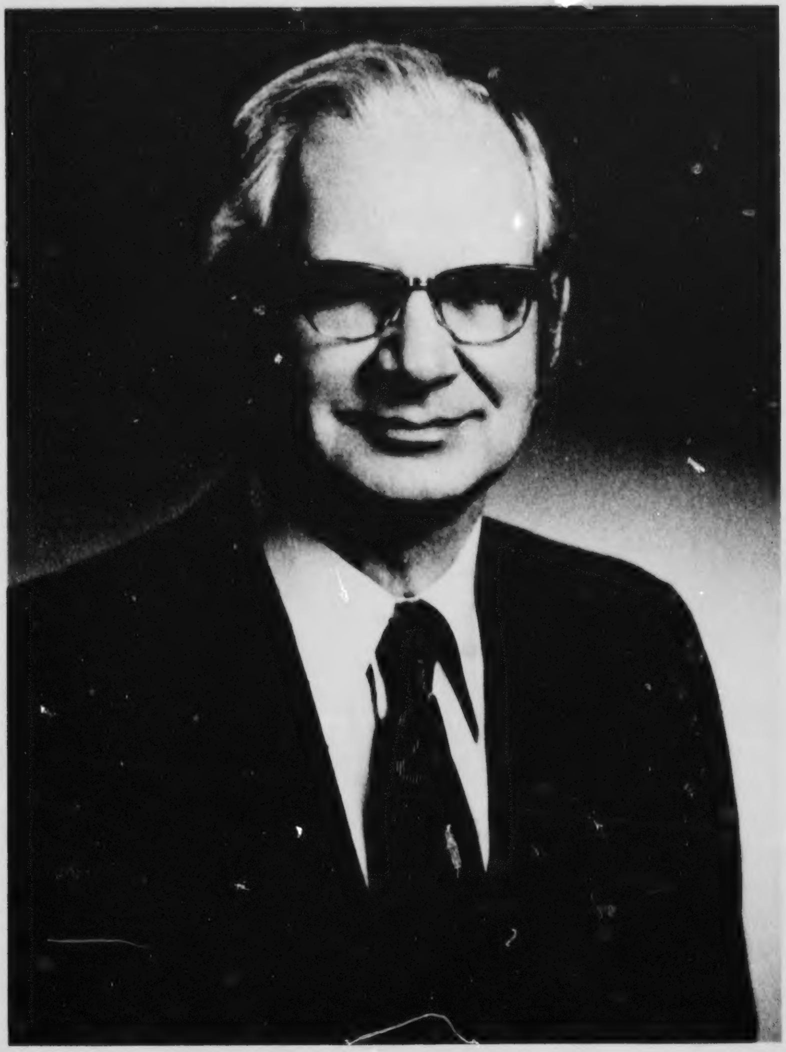
Foreword

In 1972, Alexander W. Astin and Calvin B. T. Lee wrote *The Invisible Colleges*, a Carnegie Commission study that considered the outlook for the private, nonselective institution. A year later, Norbert Hruby, President of Aquinas College, a Catholic, four-year, liberal-arts institution in Grand Rapids, Michigan, wrote *A Survival Kit for Invisible Colleges*. His book described in detail the steps that Aquinas College took to remain viable in the difficult circumstances that were predicted for the seventies. This second edition is offered because the Aquinas College approach has well withstood the test of time and has lost none of its relevance for threatened institutions. The original text has been supplemented by an epilogue in which the results of the Aquinas College reassessment of its mission, role, and scope and subsequent initiatives are discussed by the present writer, a Senior Associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

This new edition of *Survival Kit* appears at a time when the question of survival is being asked not only at nonselective, private, poorly endowed colleges such as Aquinas, but also at many state-supported institutions as well. Questions about mission, role, and scope inevitably follow. However, interest in redefining mission, role, and scope also may arise during an accrediting process, or when priorities are being established, or when plans are being drawn for institutional development. While these are not necessarily survival issues, the approach taken at Aquinas College to mission, role, and scope planning may well prove valuable at institutions less starkly or immediately threatened.

One aspect of the Aquinas College experience is especially noteworthy—the approach taken when the viability of the institution's mission, role, and scope was examined. The initial focus was on the institution—its heritage, continuing strengths, and aspirations—rather than on forces and conditions in the external environment. When Aquinas College understood what it was and what it wished to be, ways then were sought to achieve its aspirations, in view of conditions prevailing in the enveloping environment. In a time of growing pessimism about the future of higher education, this account of one institution's determination to acquire the ability to provide new and needed services to its community as a means of survival is worth telling.

J. Kent Caruthers



Norbert J. Hruby
President, Aquinas College

Dedication

This is not a scholarly book. It does not have a bibliography, and if I counted correctly, there are only thirteen footnotes, one graph, and three tables. It is not a report on research, or, if so, only in a remote sense.

If this book had a bibliography, it would not be a list of books and articles. It would be a list of names. The names would include those of friends, a few enemies, some acquaintances and colleagues, and even some people I have never met, but they would be the names of people who in one way or another have taught me whatever I know about education and educational administration.

This is really a book about educational administration. Educational administration is action. This is a how-to-do-it book, then, which deals with one of the thornier problems in American higher education today: the invisible college.

I enjoyed writing this book.

I dedicate this book to my faculty, who will understand why.

x

The
Aquinas College
Administration
Building

ocated in a metropolitan area of more than 400,000, Aquinas' heavily wooded campus gives it an integrity and nse of separation from the urban world beyond. Above, the Student Center.

1

The Odds on the Invisible Colleges

There is no reason to suppose that Alexander W. Astin and Calvin B. T. Lee are not good and kindly men. They are probably gentle with dogs and permissive with children. What more can one ask? Well, I for one might wish they were somewhat less adept at phrase-making. Invisible colleges are invisible enough without being called invisible.

Invisible colleges are in jeopardy. Astin and Lee say so. So does Paul Reinert. So, too, does Earl F. Cheit. William Jellema's statistics are hard to refute. None of them claims that jeopardy inevitably results in extinction, but neither does anyone deny that jeopardy makes an excellent precondition.

As the president of a college that conforms precisely with their two criteria of size and selectivity, I cannot deny that my college is invisible. You may never have heard of Aquinas College, or you may confuse it with any of several other institutions which also take the great Thirteenth-Century Dominican philosopher-theologian's name in vain.

Aquinas College is a Catholic, coeducational, liberal arts college located in an attractive residential neighborhood on the east end of the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Its seventy-acre campus has been called the most beautiful in the state of Michigan, with its woods, two ravines, streams, and pond. Once the estate of a wealthy lumberman, the campus today makes limited use of the original buildings. Six buildings have been built since 1954 to house most of the activities of the college. Thus the plant is modern and safe if architecturally unremarkable; it does not face the problem of early obsolescence.

Grand Rapids is a city of 200,000 with a metropolitan area encompassing again as many. Located in western Michigan, it is the second largest city in the state. Once the furniture capital of the country, it is now a highly diversified industrial, commercial, and financial center. Its distinctive "Farmers' Market," open six days a week, is testimony that Grand Rapids is not far removed from the soil. Its starkly handsome downtown area with an Alexander Calder stabile as its focal point is close to the Grand River in whose valley the city lies. Grand Rapids is a proud, conservative, and imposing city–with all the social problems that American cities are heir to, though they tend to remain below the surface except for occasional outbursts.

In addition to Aquinas there are several other post-secondary schools in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. Most distinguished of these is Calvin College (liberal arts) and Seminary (home base of the Christian Reformed Church). Grand Rapids Junior College (third-oldest junior college in America dating back to pre-World War I days), Grand Valley State College (a ten-year-old public liberal arts college located twelve miles west of the city), Davenport College (formerly a proprietary business college now seeking regional accreditation), and the well-regarded Kendall School of Design are all thriving institutions. Three of the major state universities also have extensions in Grand Rapids: the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Western Michigan University. Thus, as it can be seen, educational competition in Grand Rapids is brisk.

Although there is no medical school in Grand Rapids, the city is a major medical center with several distinguished hospitals.

Grand Rapids has more than five hundred churches. Strongest by far are the Christian Reformed and the Roman Catholic, following the ethnic division of the city into dominant Dutch on the one hand and Polish, Italian, Lithuanian, and Irish on the other. Main-line Protestant churches, fundamentalists, and Orthodox make up the rest of the Christian community. There is a small Jewish population represented by two congregations. Ecumenism has good roots in the community.

Racially Grand Rapids is more than eighty-five percent white, about twelve percent Black, and there is a small scattering of Spanish-speaking people and Indians.

Thus Grand Rapids is a city of homes, churches, and solid businesses, located in one of the more beautiful parts of the Midwest. Water and winter sports predominate, but golf and tennis are major participant sports in this comfortable middle-class middle-America community–"a good place to live," as the residents always say. Indeed it is.

Aquinas College has had a complex evolution, with four title changes and three locations in the process. It began as a novitiate normal school and was both a women's college and coeducational junior college before it became the four-year coeducational college it is today. Curious as this sequence of developments must seem to those outside Catholic higher education in the United States, it was a not unusual pattern. It traced the evolution of the Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters' vision of their mission. First, it was necessary for the Sisters to educate their own young women for teaching in the parochial schools of Michigan. Then it was seen as desirable to invite young laywomen to share in the educational experience. Third, the move downtown in 1931 and the coeducationalizing of the institution were extraordinary departures for the time (making Aquinas the first coeducational Catholic liberal arts college in the country). Finally, the expansion of the junior college into a senior college was more or less inevitable, for the attainment of a four-year status just before the outbreak of World War II filled a void in western Michigan. Aquinas was the first Michigan four-year Catholic institution serving men and women west of Detroit.

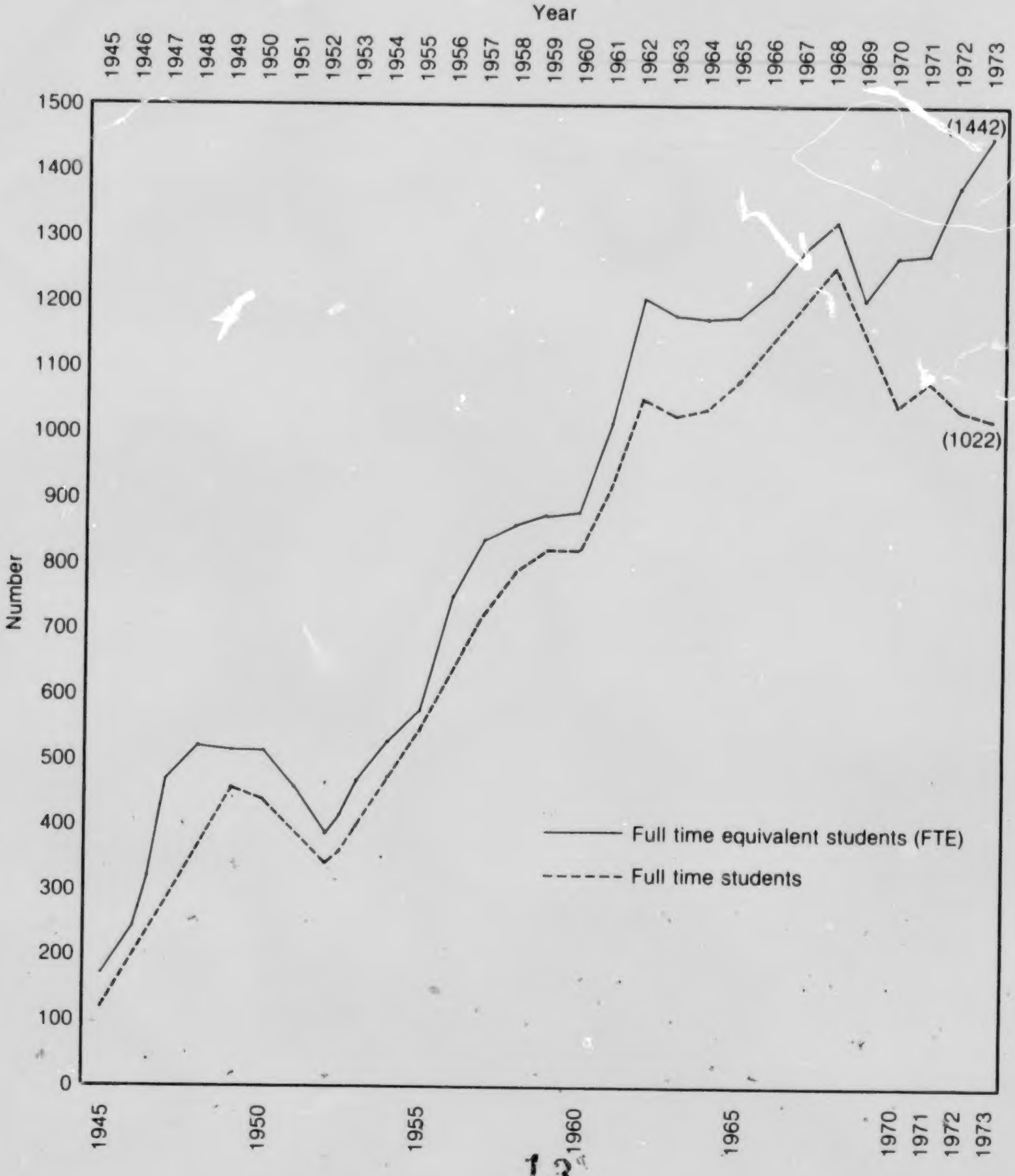
In its early days, the faculty of Aquinas College was predominantly religious, the vast majority of whom were Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids. A small cadre of Dominican priests of the eastern province of the Order of Preachers taught religion, philosophy, and an occasional secular subject while looking after the chaplaincy and the liturgical affairs of the College. A handful of laymen were among the first full-time teachers in the institution. As time went on, the number of laymen increased, of course, until the 1960's by which time laymen outnumbered both Sisters and priests on the faculty and assumed several key administrative posts. By the end of the 1960's laymen and laywomen held about sixty percent of the faculty posts and perhaps two-thirds of the administrative positions including (in 1969) the presidency.

From small beginnings Aquinas College has shown a steady growth rate since it became a senior college thirty years ago. With fewer than two hundred Full Time Equivalent students during the War years, Aquinas showed its first major increase in the post-War years of the G.I. Bill to a plateau of about five hundred. There was a decline in the early 1950's, then steady and rapid growth from four hundred in 1952 to 1,200 in 1962. During the last decade enrollment has been moving irregularly upward to its present level of just under 1,450. This final statistic, however, is misleading, for included in the 1,442 FTE students in 1972-73 were almost two hundred *fewer* young people in the 18-to-22-year-old category than there were in 1967-68. In other words, Aquinas has suffered the same decline in the recruitment of high school seniors as have most invisible colleges—and for the same reasons: constantly rising tuition charges necessitated by inflation and increasing competition for these young people from the public junior and senior colleges which under-price this private college by from $1,000 to $1,400 per year. Yet the number of FTE students has increased over the past four years. Obviously the additional students are not in the 18-to-22-year-old age group. (See graph, p. 4.)

Who are they then? Therein lies the reason for this book.

Aquinas College is, to be sure, an invisible college. Application of the Astin-Lee tables discloses that Aquinas is on Selectivity Level 3 (SAT V +

Comparison of Full Time Equivalent Students and Full Time Students
Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Michigan
1945-1972



M mean scores between 926 and 997)[1] –almost precisely at the mid-point among the 918 private four-year colleges in the study.[2]

Of Aquinas College and similar institutions, then, Astin and Lee have these dark, foreboding words to say:

> If the state college and the junior college can be regarded as the second-class citizens of higher education, then the invisible college is the third-class citizen, the unassimilated, the "outsider." It faces most of the same problems as the other two but always on a more severe scale. Because the invisible college is private, it gets only limited support from the state. Because it is unknown, it suffers in the competition for federal grants. Because its financial resources are pitifully scant, it cannot make attractive offers to students needing financial help. A state college with its low tuition and government aid sources, is in a much better position to attract such students Because the invisible college is church-related in a society that is increasingly secular, it must grapple with the question of retaining affiliation or severing the bonds with its parent church. . . .
>
> Of all institutions of higher education, invisible colleges are the most likely to become extinct.[3]

Their data are impressive, their logic sound, their findings reasonable, but their reading of the death warrant is, I believe, premature. Against the great weight of their evidence–and that of other serious researchers in the field–a case must and can be made. This *Survival Kit* is an attempt to make a case, to offer a solution.

Actually the woods are full of people with solutions. These solutions–these "survival kits"–seem to have one thing in common: they are all essentially negative and defensive. Almost without exception they indicate ways in which colleges and universities in financial jeopardy can and should *save* money, not *earn* more money. They are strong for new management techniques and the resultant economies. Excellent! I am second to none in my admiration for better management (my board had better believe it). When additional revenue is mentioned at all, it is always described as some kind of subsidy, usually from the government. Again may I hasten to add that I find no fault in government subsidy for private higher education. But I do deplore responses to our plight that are basically contractionist and bearish, when in fact the whole world lies before us to be conquered.

Where do we begin? Right where we are. We begin with an assessment of our present personnel and materiel resources. We recognize our responsiblities to the student clientele we now have. Then we adjust our stance so as to recognize our responsibilities to other potential student clienteles whom we have not previously served.

Now, any adjustment of stance threatens the rhetoric on the first page of the college catalog. Most often, however, the holy writ on that page turns out to be sacred fiction after all, but it is sacred to someone, and it cannot simply be sloughed off. It can, however, be put on ice until such time as the institution finds its new identity. A new first page of the catalog may have to be written to match the new reality. In the meantime interim editions of the catalog can begin with page 2.

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[1] A. W. Astin and C. B. T. Lee, *The Invisible Colleges* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), Table 1, p. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, Table 4, p. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

Any assessment of our college as it is today is apt to reveal that it has certain predictable assets and liabilities.

First, the liabilities. Those of the economic variety are all too familiar. The Astin-Lee recital of them above will serve our purpose here, with one additional pointed comment. Their acknowledgment of the fact that most invisible colleges are church-related may suggest that church-relatedness somehow means financial support from the church. Of the 275 or so Catholic colleges and universities in the United States fewer than a dozen receive any direct aid from the Church. Sponsorship by a religious congregation—for example, the sponsorship of Aquinas College by the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids—is not to be confused with support by the Church. The religious congregation is itself an independent and autonomous corporation which receives no financial support from the Church. Like the Catholic college or university, the Catholic religious congregation has the basic freedom to starve, in its own way and on its own time.

Church-relatedness, then, is most often not to be taken as a financial asset. There is no pipeline from Rome, or even from the local chancery office.

Let us look to the non-economic liabilities of our college.

(1) *The first page of the college catalog.*

(2) *The rest of the catalog too, sometimes.* See Chapter 2.

(3) *The deeply ingrained conservatism of a majority of the faculty.* It is doubtful that a case could be made that liberal arts college faculties are more conservative than any other group of people of comparable age, education, and status in the community, but no one will ever be able to convince me that they are less conservative. Their conservatism is not of social or economic or political ideology. On the contrary they frequently form the left flank of any social, economic, or political movement. Consequently they are seen by the world at large as a radical element in society. If the world only knew! If the world could only see them in their native habitat, it would realize that most academics are strict conservatives with a fierce resistance to institutional change—if the institution to be changed happens to be their own.

(4) *The concomitant fear of change.* This is to be found everywhere except in the student body or so goes the legend, but I doubt it. Invisible colleges are not Berkeley. In fact, I doubt very much that Berkeley is really Berkeley either. Recognizing that all change is not for the better, we may treat this liability as well as the one before as crypto-assets, at least in part. They are natural insurance against the madness of innovators.

(5) *A general unawareness of opportunities for alternative educational ventures in the outside community.* After all, how can our college be aware of other opportunities when its centuries-old tradition has delimited its range of vision to liberal arts education for the young? It would be like suggesting to a railroad that it is in the transportation business instead of the railroad business.

(6) *A lack of key staff personnel with an awareness of such opportunities.* Naturally. What would an adult educator, for instance, be doing on a liberal arts campus? With whom would a community education man go out to lunch?

(7) *A general loss of heart.* Hard to imagine the source of the recent defeatism, really. Certainly it could not be the current literature, could it?

Now the assets.

(1) *A dedicated faculty.* This is much more than AAUP rhetoric. Faculties of invisible colleges *are* dedicated—dedicated to the institution and, even more importantly, to the students, not merely to their own careers or their academic discipline or their research. Since in all likelihood the invisible college is church-related, there is another dimension to the dedication that is not apt to be found in more prestigious, thoroughly secular institutions.

(2) *Idealism.* Closely related to their sense of dedication is their sense of idealism, of commitment to service to mankind. Proof lies in their willingness to suffer smaller compensation and harder labor to support the institution and the ideals for which it stands.

(3) *A hungry faculty and administration.* The very sense of jeopardy not only sobers the idealist; it also starts the juices of invention.

(4) *Freedom of action.* The invisible college, being poor and nonprestigious, has nothing to lose by experimentation. Being independent, it has no outside force to obstruct its experimentation. Being small, it has no cumbersome bureaucracy to combat. A good idea in the morning can be a reality in the afternoon.

(5) *A "favorable" student-faculty ratio.* I still recall with a pang akin to heartburn that in the last North Central report on my college, within the same paragraph, we were congratulated on our "favorable" student-faculty ratio (12-to-1) and chided for our then precarious financial condition. With any more favorable factors like that we need not have worried about the future: there would not have been any. Yet, seen differently, the low student-faculty ratio *is* an asset, for it indicates that the faculty, our most valuable asset, being under-utilized, can be invested in new enterprise!

Incomplete as these lists of liabilities and assets are, they ought to be enough to set the wheels turning. Though the liabilities outnumber the assets seven to five, the way things have been going lately for the invisible colleges, seven-to-five is good odds. Let us take heart and move on. Remember: We have nothing to lose but our deficit!

2

The Ordeal of Change

How well is your invisible college performing its mission?

If it is doing it commendably, move on to Chapter 3. If it is doing it very badly, perhaps euthanasia is the answer. If nobody knows, then it behooves us to find out. How? By self-study, of course.

Basically there are two approaches to institutional self-study. One is deductive, from the general to the particular. The other is inductive, from the particular to the general. Everyone since Francis Bacon knows that the inductive is the more scientifically reliable way to get at reality; yet everyone, perhaps including Francis Bacon, tends to act otherwise. It is somehow easier, perhaps more comforting, for the analyst to take as his or her point of departure some safe truths and dependable generalities. They serve as criteria or touchstones to test the data.

In a sense the regional accrediting associations have tended to institutionalize the deductive mode of institutional self-study. The institution under examination is called upon to state its own objectives, then to measure itself against those stated objectives. Certainly this is a more sensible approach than the primitive checklist of standards to which the institution must arbitrarily conform, but implicit in the newer approach are the same "safe truths" and "dependable generalities." What institution under the pressure of justifying itself to its regional accrediting agency will not fall back on the conventional wisdom? Is it not more secure, at this time of all times, to abide by the teachings of the Elders?

Just how "safe" and "dependable" are these truths and generalities?

American higher education subscribes, unconsciously or subconsciously, to a long list of half-truths, which make comfortable generalities on which to base the enterprise. Discard them and what have we left?

Nothing but hard and intractable facts, plus a host of opinions and prejudices by which we live and work our way toward immortality.

My objection to the deductive approach of institutional self-study is that it inevitably falls back upon venerable half-truths and outright fallacies. A deductive self-study may have to be used to satisfy the regional accrediting agency, but it ought not satisfy the administration of an invisible college. Too much is at stake. Survival is at stake. A hard, straight look at reality is the only sensible course.

"I accepted the presidency of Aquinas College," the *Master Plan of the Self-Study of Aquinas College* (February 26, 1969) begins,

> on condition that the College enter immediately upon an intensive inductive institutional self-study in the belief that the attainment of educational excellence is not possible without thorough, accurate and objective self-knowledge. . . .
>
> **The Questions Aquinas Faces**
>
> The first question which Aquinas faces is not that of survival. That is the second question. The first question is whether Aquinas deserves to survive. . . .
>
> This course of study is to examine Aquinas' present condition in the light of its past in order to chart its future. What we are setting out to do is to test the viability of a private, coeducational liberal arts college which claims to be Catholic, even Christian. We want to see what difference an Aquinas College education makes to its graduates. We expect to uncover failures and deficiencies, gaps between aspirations and achievements. Above all, we hope to gain a better insight into the heart of the matter—what kind of college ought Aquinas become?

I went on in my *Master Plan* to outline the methods and organization by which the Self-Study was to be conducted. We would undertake an opinion-sampling and fact-gathering operation by means of elaborate, anonymous questionnaires to be distributed to students, faculty, alumni-alumnae, and their spouses. We would also draw on data already available at the college and on the experience of others through readings and visits to other colleges and universities.

The deliberative work of the Self-Study was to be done by study groups in five areas: governance, faculty rights and responsibilities, student rights and responsibilities, teaching resources and theory, and learning resources and theory. No one with administrative responsibility in one of these areas was to sit on that group, but he or she must be called to talk to the group about his or her function. All faculty members were to belong to one group, and each group was to have, according to the initial plan, three student members with full rights of participation. The budget of the Self-Study would be managed by an executive committee, and administrative activities would be delegated to a director, both under the supervision of the President.

Each study group was to work to a schedule of three phases. In Phase I, each group was to determine, by means of a strictly inductive approach, what the questions were which it would have to answer and by what means it might best answer them. Phase II would involve gathering and studying the answers to the relevant questions and would end in the submission of a final written report by each study group. Midway through each of these two phases, an advisory board of outside experts who had consented to help in this effort would visit the campus, meet publicly with each group, and help each group to reach and maintain an objective approach to their problems.

In Phase III, the advisory board would visit the campus again to participate in the session at which all study groups would make their final reports. I concluded the *Master Plan* with a brief description of how the recommendations would be legislated into action: "At this point the key recommendations of the Study Group on Governance which deal with the decision-making apparatus are presented to the plenary session of the college community for ratification. Once this structure has been established, then all other recommendations of the five study groups are referred to appropriate decision-making bodies as agenda–for appropriate action."

Fifteen months, millions of statistics, $35,000, and countless man-hours of faculty, administration, and student labor later, the Self-Study ended–on May 2, 1970.

This is not the place to chronicle the ordeal of Aquinas College from February 1969 to May 1970. Salient events in that period need to be recorded, however, if the process of inductive self-study is to be understood in both its strengths and weaknesses.

The Self-Study followed the outline set down in the *Master Plan* very closely. Two significant deviations, however, did occur. First, by the fall of 1969 students were playing a much more important role in the study groups than was originally envisioned. Instead of the three students per group called for in the *Master Plan*, there were from five to twenty in each group; the total number of actively participating students probably reached seventy-five or eighty. Second, the simple statement of a hope in Section IV of the *Plan*–"Other colleges and universities will be visited"–became the pivotal episode of the Self-Study. Let me explain.

In February 1969, there was little expectation that we could find any outside money to finance the Self-Study. I knew, from previous experience, that foundations and government agencies take little interest in so internal an enterprise as a self-study. Nevertheless we applied to the Grand Rapids Foundation for some $14,000 to finance off-campus exploratory probes. The Foundation responded affirmatively, and in early fall our wistful hope became a firm part of our master plan. Had the Foundation not responded, we would have had to forego the off-campus exploration at a cost that we could not have foreseen at that time. There was no way that we could have responsibly financed the off-campus exploration project. On June 30, 1969, we had ended our fiscal year with a deficit of

$60,000, first in the recent history of the College; and we were entering on a new fiscal year with a projected deficit in excess of $410,000 (the actual loss a year later was $260,000). Certainly this was no time to fund junkets out of the operating budget!

Phase I of the Self-Study started somewhat traumatically. In a two-week period more than 4,500 questions were filed on 3 x 5 cards in collection boxes scattered all over the campus. Enough of the questions were of the are-you-still-beating-your-wife type to reopen old wounds and inflict some new ones, but for the most part the questions, asked anonymously, were serious and pointed. The 4,500 cards were sorted into five categories, to match the five study groups–governance, faculty rights and responsibilities, student rights and responsibilities, teaching resources and theory, and learning resources and theory. The study groups were thus provided their basic agenda by the whole college community.

Six weeks into Phase I the advisory board came on campus for its first of three long week-end visits.[1] The effect was electric. This first contact of the Aquinas community with the distinguished panel went far to making the wounded forget their wounds; and the real interest of the panel in Aquinas impressed even the skeptics. The week-end ended in a kind of euphoria. Nothing more had really been achieved than that both College and panel had got to know one another, but it provided the lift needed to carry the community forward into Phase II. The agenda of the study groups were set. The questionnaires were being designed. By the end of the academic year a few weeks later, the Aquinas community dispersed, knowing that over the summer Phase I would be completed and that upon everyone's return in the fall, Phase II would begin.

The major questionnaires were all designed during the summer, and the alumnus(a)-spouse questionnaire was administered. When the college reassembled in the fall, Phase II did begin on schedule. No one could have foreseen the troubles that lay ahead. Announcement of the Grand Rapids Foundation grant was cheering news, and most of the students and faculty found their questionnaires interesting and provocative. But when the study groups got down to the serious business of coming to grips with the issues implicit in their agenda, they found the work tedious, time-consuming, and frustrating. The inductive approach was proving difficult and unrelenting. Without the comfort of some time-honored touchstones they struggled with masses of unwieldy data. They were eager to offer answers to the problems which had surfaced but not to do the hard work needed to document the answers. In short, they wanted to go deductive, and when they could not, they were baffled.

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[1] The Aquinas College Self-Study advisory board was comprised of Dr. Robert Blackburn, University of Michigan; Rev. Carl Hangartner, S.J., St. Louis University; Dr. Ann Heiss, University of California; Dr. Nevitt Sanford, Wright Institute; Dr. George Shuster, University of Notre Dame; and Dr. John F. A. Taylor, Michigan State University.

As the first semester proceeded and Phase II wore on, the level of frustration mounted, but it was not until everyone returned from mid-year break in early January 1970, that matters came to a head. The approach of the second visit of the advisory board (which was expecting progress reports) and a spring deadline on study group reports probably did as much as anything to precipitate a show-down meeting of the study groups and the administration. Long-suppressed suspicions that the whole Self-Study was really just a charade and that tucked away somewhere there was a grand design for the future of Aquinas College came into the open. Somehow these fears and suspicions were temporarily allayed, but it was obvious that they remained just beneath the surface.

It was at this critical moment that the first off-campus visitation team was organized and made ready for a foray to another college. (This was to be the first expenditure of the Grand Rapids Foundation money.) Five members of the faculty—an extraordinarily apt cross-section of the Aquinas faculty, it should be noted—selected Earlham College as the site of their visit. Each member of the team had a particular area of interest to explore. The Earlham administration graciously consented to put the college at the disposal of the Aquinas team members.

The team spent three days at Earlham. On the fourth it returned home and held a debriefing session with all members of the Aquinas community who cared to hear; about a third of the faculty and several students were present. They came to hear how an off-campus visit of this kind was managed, for soon they too were to go on the road. The evening was a memorable one. The reporting team members were enthusiastic about what they had seen and heard; their listeners were fascinated. They plied the team with questions when the formal presentation ended. At the close of the evening there was the beginning of a new hope in the Self-Study. The grapevine carried the news all over the campus the next day. Not all suspicions disappeared, but a new tide began to run.

A few days later the advisory board arrived on campus for the second long week-end. Again its presence gave everyone a lift, but the tone this time was much more serious than it had been the preceding April. The progress reports were uneven, and the response of the panelists was mixed, but there was enough good work evident to warrant a growing feeling of encouragement.

By this time the computerized results of the several questionnaires were being duplicated and distributed to the study groups, and meetings of the groups were getting more frequent and longer. Plans were moving ahead very rapidly now on the off-campus visits. Lee Jacokes,[2] director of the Self-Study, suggested that instead of scattering the visits over the rest of the spring we ought simply to call classes off for a week and make all the visits at once.

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[2] Mr. Jacokes, a young psychology instructor—and, significantly, a clinical psychologist—carried the heavy burden of the directorship with distinction.

So it was that the second week of March 1970 was set aside. Twenty-eight colleges in the Middle West and East were identified by the study groups as having one or more aspects of their operations which were of interest to one or more of the study groups. The matters of interest were everything from governance to dormitory living styles, from curriculum to counseling systems, from teaching methods to learning resource centers. The colleges and universities named by the study groups as having practices worth special on-site study were the following: Amherst, Antioch, Baldwin-Wallace, Beloit, Bennington, Carleton, Findlay, Grinnell, Goddard, Hampshire, Hillsdale, Hiram, Kalamazoo, Kenyon, Knox, Lawrence University, Michigan State University, Mount Holyoke, Oberlin, Shimer, Thomas More, Valparaiso University (Christ College), Wayne State University (Monteith College), Webster, and the Universities of Chicago (the College), Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Hampshire.

The president or dean of each of these institutions was called and asked if our teams would be welcome. Without exception the proposal was greeted with friendly interest; in every case our visitors were accorded the red-carpet treatment. Twenty-eight visiting teams varying in membership from one to eight—faculty and students and a few administrators—fanned out over the northeastern quadrant of the United States on March 9, 1970. Three days later they returned to spend the fourth day of the week within their study groups briefing each other on their findings; on Friday the whole college community gathered in a plenary session to share their experiences.

During the day-long meeting on Friday, a remarkable discovery was made. Those who had gone forth five days before thinking that Aquinas was very nearly a perfect college were now having second thoughts after having spent three intensive days on another campus. On the other hand those who had left with the idea that Aquinas was an abomination came home feeling that maybe it had a few things to recommend it. In short, the experience of exploring another college tended to have a broadening effect on both the optimists and the pessimists, and a leavening effect on everyone. By the end of the day on March 13, 1970, it could be predicted with some degree of certainty that the Self-Study, which seemed a near-disaster six weeks before, would generate some good results after all.

The work of the study groups was now in high gear. April 25 had been set as the deadline for all final reports and May 1-2 as the dates for the final visit of the advisory board, at which time the final reports would be evaluated by the panelists. Study groups which had been working separately on certain projects now joined forces to synthesize their recommendations. Reports—including a long minority report from one member of the governance group—were submitted, duplicated, and distributed to the college community, previewed at a preliminary plenary session on April 28, and reviewed in depth on May 1 and 2 in the presence of the advisory board. The Self-Study was finally over.

What the Self-Study had produced was two hundred or more recommendations, graded as to priority but no more. Nothing had really yet been decided. There were only recommendations, and these needed to be legislated into being if they were to be anything more than just pipedreams for Aquinas.

The 1969 *Master Plan* was necessarily vague on how this legislative action was to take place. It said: "At this point the key recommendations of the Study Group on Governance which deal with the decision-making apparatus are presented to the plenary session of the College community for ratification. Once this structure has been established, then all other recommendations of the five study groups are referred to appropriate decision-making bodies as agenda–for appropriate action."

This sounds like a sensible statement except that it ignored a central political fact of life at Aquinas College–viz., that there already was a faculty constitution. This faculty constitution had been fought for long and hard by the faculty until it was finally accepted and ratified by the board of trustees in the spring of 1968. This constitution gave extraordinary (virtually exclusive) powers to the faculty on practically all affairs of the College.

The solution was obvious. Legislating could not be done by "the new decision-making structure." It had to be done by the old. It had to be done by the faculty under its 1968 constitution. The irony of this situation, of course, was that the great thrust of the Self-Study recommendations on governance was that the students should have a much greater role in decision-making. Thus the faculty had to legislate a new structure which would make the students full partners in the enterprise but at the expense of Faculty Power!

An extraordinary meeting of the faculty was called on May 6, 1970. It was an extraordinary meeting at an extraordinary moment in the history of American higher education. The Cambodian incursion had just occurred a week before; the killings at Kent State were two days old; the killings at Jackson were about to occur. While the whole educational establishment seemed about to go up in flames, Aquinas College was having the most important faculty meeting in its history.

By no means oblivious to what was going on in the world outside, the faculty was convened at 9 a.m. on May 6. Sitting with the faculty was a panel of fifteen students, the most active student participants in the Self-Study. The panel was granted permission to participate with voice; it was also granted permission to take a vote within itself on each issue brought before the faculty. This vote was to have only advisory force, but it was to be taken before the faculty voted on each issue; thus the student vote was bound to have great persuasive power.

Once the role of the students in the meeting was established, the faculty began to deal with the "highest priority" recommendations emanating from the Self-Study study groups. Hour after hour the process went on, everyone intent on maintaining the momentum of the last four months and especially the last three weeks. With only brief breaks for meals, the faculty and the student panel labored for thirteen hours. Finally at three minutes past 10 p.m., the meeting was adjourned for lack of a quorum, but by that time history had been made. Following is a summary of the matters legislated on May 6, 1970:

(1) A new bicameral governance structure was mandated under a new community constitution to be drafted—to supersede the Faculty constitution and the student constitution.
(2) A more flexible curricular structure was adopted which is intended to give students greater freedom of choice and a more personalized academic experience.
(3) Degree requirements were reduced and simplified.
(4) Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary concentrations were added to the list of conventional majors.
(5) Departmental status was granted to such new fields as geography and religious studies making possible majors in these areas.
(6) Flexible scheduling of classes was provided for.
(7) A new grading system (A-B-C-No Credit) was instituted.
(8) Several new "individualizing practices"—e.g., life experience credit, credit by examination, independent study, off-campus study, etc.—were authorized for all students at Aquinas.
(9) Machinery for continuous curriculum review was invented.
(10) Machinery for quick approval of experiments in curriculum and instruction was devised.
(11) A new degree in general education (without a major or concentration) was approved.
(12) Divisional organization of the College to replace the conventional departmental structure was encouraged.
(13) A clear mandate for increased recruitment of and services for disadvantaged minority students was issued.
(14) Regulations on student life were markedly relaxed.
(15) Student rights were given additional safeguards.

Impressive and interesting as this day's legislation was, it is not offered here as a matter of any particular importance outside Aquinas College. What occurred at Aquinas College in 1969-70 was a rapid and massive updating. This updating might well have taken other forms than it took, and it would have been equally valid. What is important is the *manner* in which it occurred. It occurred through inductive self-study; it occurred through the democratic process within the limits of existing constitutional boundaries; it occurred without administrative fiat (except for the launching of the Self-Study itself) and without administrative interference.

This kind of self-study, harrowing and precarious as it was at times, nevertheless provided a useful vehicle for the entrance of a new president.

Instead of autocratically mandating certain changes the new president by means of the Self-Study was able to have his faculty and students tell him the course they wanted to pursue. Thus he could lead in a direction that was pre-determined to be acceptable to a large working majority of the college community.

There is more that needs to be said, however, about the inductive approach and method of institutional self-study. It is not a perfect means of effecting change.

It is slow. What we did in fifteen months at Aquinas could have been accomplished in a few weeks by dictatorial methods.

It is dangerous. The crisis in confidence we experienced in January 1970 might have been fatal—or a second crisis, had there not been the off-campus explorations financed by foundation money, might have been the *coup de grâce*.

It is threatening. The uncertainties of so unstructured a process cause ambiguities and a degree of ambivalence that may go beyond the limits of tolerance for some.

It is polarizing. There is more than enough time and occasion for people to choose up sides and form opposing camps.

It is expensive. Aside from the foundation money spent on the off-campus project, at least $20,000 was spent on fees and travel expenses for the advisory board and on data processing, three times as much on the latter as on the former. The expenditure of faculty, administration, and student time is prodigal, to be sure, and cannot be measured in dollars.

Yet for all these costs Aquinas College has felt that the Self-Study was worth the price. No one supposes that there is any quick, safe, reassuring, unifying, inexpensive, painless way to effect change. For every cost there was a compensating reward, not the least of which was the emergence of new leadership in the faculty and student body, scarcely even suspected before the Self-Study began. On the far side of a dangerous passage, of course, one tends to remember the pleasant as pleasant and the unpleasant as amusing, but you may well believe me when I tell you that the grim aspects of the Self-Study still do not strike me as funny. I have one bleeding ulcer to document that statement.

3

On Taking a New Stance

Let us assume, now, that the basic enterprise of our invisible liberal arts college is sound, that our prime clientele is being well served. Let us also assume that the college community has been sufficiently persuaded by dint of leadership or circumstances or both that a new stance has to be taken if the institution, now judged to be worthy, is to survive. Let us recall that we have a dedicated, idealistic, hungry faculty and administration with the necessary freedom of action to move out into new areas and with enough untapped time and energy to make a significant difference. Given these factors, we are ready to begin looking for new clienteles.

Finding these new clienteles is the responsibility of the administration. This means that the administration must develop an acute sense of serendipity, a genuine relish for adventure, and a streak of courage. With opportunism as a technique, not as a philosophy, the administration must generate a high degree of sophistication about its potential new markets in the community. If it survives the shock of thinking about *markets*, a word apt to set any respectable educator's teeth on edge, it is probably ready to proceed to take major strides toward survival of the institution.

The administration has as its point of departure a new strategy. It is a strategy of service to the community in which the college finds its locus. It is a willingness to fill college-level educational needs not now being filled by anyone else. It is a strategy of utilizing more fully the presently under-utilized personnel and materiel resources of the college for the benefit of the community. It is a strategy of going beyond the resources of the college to the unutilized or under-utilized educational resources of the community itself. It is a strategy of putting together, in the manner of a broker, those with educational needs and the resources necessary to fill the needs. If all this can be done for fees exceeding the costs, then we have a strategy for operational budget support that may indeed mean the survival of our invisible college.

Let us go back and enumerate some of the under-utilized resources of the college.

Primary among them, of course, is the faculty. Most, if not all, invisible colleges which have deficits or are moving toward deficits have low student-faculty ratios. Most experts on college finances will agree that a desirable student-faculty ratio ought to range somewhere between 16-to-1 and 20-to-1. Certainly ratios below 16-to-1 are a luxury that only the best-endowed, highest-priced, elitist schools can possibly afford. There are invisible colleges with ratios lower than 16-to-1 which are still operating in the black only because they are living on hidden subsidies.

Among these are Catholic colleges with large fractions of their faculty made up of religious men or women, who, under their vow of poverty, contribute their services. These schools can avoid deficits longer than most other invisible colleges, but the day of reckoning is at hand for them too. This is in part because of the declining numbers of religious in congregations and the need of the working members to earn enough to support the growing numbers of those beyond retirement age. This kind of college, too, almost invariably passes its savings from contributed services on to the consumers, the students. A common phenomenon in this kind of Catholic college is an unrealistically low tuition rate. The college will hold the line against rising tuition beyond all reason in an attempt not to deprive its present clientele of a "Catholic education." There are two problems, however, with this policy of holding the line: first, its low tuition will still be higher than that of any tax-supported public institution; second, its low tuition will deprive the college of additional revenue needed to raise the quality of education that would really make the college competitive with the public institution.

The best hedge against the rising cost of instruction is a higher student-faculty ratio. Either more students in the 18-to-22-year-old bracket will have to be recruited, or students from other age brackets will have to be found to fill the vacancies and lift the ratio. With rising tuition constantly worsening the competitive situation for invisible colleges vis-à-vis public institutions, there are few options remaining: either students outside the conventional college age range will have to be attracted, or faculties will have to be cut drastically. Once the faculty is decimated, the end is clearly in sight.

The second under-utilized resource of the invisible college may be the administration. Parkinson's Law operates with the same rigor in the academic as in the business world; yet in a time of stress it is not impossible to reverse some of its workings if not actually to repeal it. Specifically, rather than eliminate certain administrative slots it may be desirable to combine some, thus releasing some administrative time and energy for work in new program areas. On paper this is more plausible than it may be in fact, for there is no guarantee that the administrator whose time is recaptured has any aptitude for new program development and administration. If not, he can, of course, be replaced by someone who has. In any case, it can be argued that the slot should not be lost through an economy-at-any-cost policy. The cost may turn out to be prohibitive.

The third resource is the student body. It may seem bizarre even to mention the primary clientele of the college as a potential resource. This is not a proposal that the inmates take over the asylum. Rather it is a proposal that some students under some circumstances may in fact be able to enhance their own learning experiences by engaging in appropriate teaching experiences. Without dwelling on the matter, let me mention a successful application of this principle at Aquinas College. Senior students in the art department proved to be highly effective instructors in Saturday morning enrichment classes for junior high school students.

The materiel resources of the college and their further exploitation will vary widely from one institution to another, but a few generalizations are probably in order. Many colleges overbuilt during the 1950's and 1960's, particularly dormitories. The problem with finding additional uses for dormitories is that most of them are government-financed, and under the provisions of the long-term loans there is little flexibility in the uses to which the buildings may be put. Yet even in the case of dormitories there is considerable opportunity to expand the conventional notion of resident programs for students older or younger than the 18-to-22-year-old bracket. Expensive fine arts facilities and science facilities virtually cry out for community educational uses, and athletic facilities need little more than imagination to convert them into health clubs in off-hours. Special equipment, whether it be scientific or athletic or fine arts, is rarely used so continuously that it can never be made available to institutions or individuals in the community – for a fee, of course.

More interesting than the under-utilized resources of one's own institution, however, are those in the outside community – more interesting simply because they are rarely seen as potential assets of the invisible college. The principal potential educational resource in the community, beyond question, is all the men and women with the competence, the desire, and even the credentials to teach, who are not now employed in any educational enterprise. The world is full of frustrated potential or former teachers, who for reasons of their own are not in education but would fulfill themselves by at least a part-time entry into the field. Why should not the invisible college open its doors to these often highly qualified men and women and thereby enrich its pool of available teaching talent? Expense is not a serious factor, for in many cases these outsiders are highly successful in their regular professional or business endeavors, and compensation for teaching is a secondary consideration to the other rewards they will receive.

And there are materiel resources in the community, too, which are available for the asking: computer time, technical libraries, training centers and facilities that industry uses only part of the time, research equipment of all kinds, and so on.

All that is needed to mobilize these resources—those of the college and those of the community—is a college with the ingenuity to "broker" their use to the people with educational needs not now being served.

At about this juncture it may be objected by the invisible college administrator that none of this is new, that he or she has tried all or most of these things already, and they have not really made that much difference.

Forgive me if I refuse to believe the non-believer. That none of these things is new I will not argue; that he or she has tried all or most of them I will not argue either—but I will argue that he or she has never employed them fully or systematically. If he or she had, they would have made a difference.

To make full and systematic use of the college's resources and the community's resources on behalf of new clienteles in the community requires a fundamental change of attitude on the part of the administration and the faculty of the invisible college. As we already observed in Chapter 1, there may have to be some changes on the first page of the catalog. The changes that may have to be made may go far beyond mere changes in rhetoric. The changes may have to go to the very foundations of the institution. Even the registrar and the bursar may have to do things a little differently!

4

An Experiment That Did Not Work

Will the principles set down in Chapters 1 and 3 really work?

The experience of Aquinas College indicates that indeed they do (see Chapters 5 and 6). Yet the most thorough-going application of the principles thus far attempted at Aquinas was abortive. Grim as that story is, it warrants telling here, for it is instructive in many ways. Not the least of these lessons is that trying something new has to be based on the right to be wrong.

In the fall of 1969 it looked as though Aquinas College would have, within a year or two, an instant engineering school. What it had, within eighteen months, was the wisdom born of a hangover.

This is the story.

One day in mid-August 1969, I received a telephone call from James Sebastian, President of Rapistan Incorporated, a Grand Rapids-based manufacturer of conveyor equipment. I knew Mr. Sebastian by reputation only. He was a leading industrialist and a long-time trustee of Albion College, a man of great civic spirit and a champion of private higher education.

On the appointed date three of my young staff members and I went to the Little Red School House, a handsomely remodeled and modified Nineteenth-Century country school house which Rapistan now uses as a training center for its international and national operations. Mr. Sebastian brought three of his key administrators with him. The Rapistan people were quite familiar with our Career Action program, scheduled to be formally launched within the next ten days (see Chapter 5), and on the basis of their understanding of it, they now wanted to outline some of their long-standing educational problems.

Rapistan's director of personnel reported that he saw in the Greater

Grand Rapids area a serious shortage of technically trained manpower, at four levels: (a) journeyman; (b) technician; (c) engineer at the bachelor's level; and (d) manager at the MBA level. He recognized that Aquinas could not deal with the problem at the first two levels but that at the third and fourth levels there might be some way it might be interested in helping. Mr. Sebastian indicated that Rapistan was one of many engineering-oriented industries in the Greater Grand Rapids area that might support an institution willing to generate programs at the third and fourth levels. I responded that Aquinas, though it had a modest pre-engineering program and a baccalaureate-level business administration program was predominantly a liberal arts college, and further that it was in a precarious financial position. To be sure, there was no risk capital available to enter upon so expensive and uncertain an enterprise as a new engineering school, much less an MBA program.

The Rapistan people said that they understood, but they hoped that Aquinas would at least give some thought to the problem. Rapistan and other Grand Rapids area industries were already collaborating with Grand Valley State College in a business internship program, and the same industries might be willing to collaborate with Aquinas on an engineering internship program. We thanked them for thinking of us.

The Aquinas contingent left the Little Red School House in thoughtful silence. On the one hand, here was first fruit of the College's new policy of open cooperation with the community; on the other hand, we were being asked to deal with a problem of technical education for which we had minimal resources.

The brainstorming that ensued was intense. What came of it, in the next three weeks, was a full-blown theory of educational brokerage, the main outlines of which have been set down in Chapter 3 above. Specifically, we saw vast and varied resources in the Greater Grand Rapids area. In one electronic company alone we saw a sufficient number of Ph.D.'s in engineering and mathematics to staff a good-sized engineering college. In several companies we saw laboratory facilities, currently being used no more than forty hours a week. We saw industries and banks with considerable unused computer capacity. There were sophisticated technical libraries to which access could easily be had. We suspected that sprinkled around the industrial and business community were scores, perhaps hundreds, of men and women with teaching background in the very areas needed for an engineering school faculty, certainly with the credentials necessary for such a faculty.

Meanwhile on our own campus we saw our physics and mathematics departments hurting for want of majors. We knew that we had all the science courses, and, of course, the humanities and social science courses needed for an undergraduate program in engineering—if the technical courses could be somehow put together. Visions of an instant engineering school began to dance in our heads.

A visit to the headquarters of the North Central Association in September proved encouraging. Two key administrators in the college commission office listened with great interest to our story. They explained the necessary preliminary accreditation process, noted the availability of the Association's consulting service, and gave considerable moral support to the experiment we had in mind.

I now returned to the Rapistan people with a plan for solving Grand Rapids' chronic problem in finding qualified engineering manpower. (The MBA program, we agreed, would have to wait.) They were enthusiastic and asked to us to proceed with our planning. In October the Aquinas Board of Trustees was informed of the plan and recent developments; it approved, thereby explicitly endorsing the College's previously unspoken shift in stance.

The organization of the joint effort between Aquinas and the industrial community now proceeded rapidly. Under the leadership of Mr. Sebastian, an Executive Council of major corporation presidents[1] and the College President formed in December; a planning committee of second-level administrators, chiefly personnel and engineering vice-presidents, began a survey of the engineering personnel needs of the business community. The Executive Council took on the responsibility of raising money to finance a thorough feasibility study of the whole project, the development of a plan of action, and the implementation of the first phases of the plan. A search was begun to find a project director, who could serve in the administration of the College at the level of a deanship.

Meanwhile the faculty of Aquinas College had been thoroughly apprised of the project; the science and mathematics departments were alerted to the possibility of early collaboration with the planning committee–as soon as the project director was engaged.

So, during the winter of 1969-70, while the College was going through the particular anguish of the Self-Study, the administration was working concurrently with the Executive Council and the planning committee on the development of the engineering school project. The most important objective to be attained now was the discovery of a person to head the project.

We found our director at Rapistan! Mr. Sebastian, recognizing the risks involved and the need for an early appointment, introduced us to Leo Yager, manager of one of the Rapistan divisions.[2] Mr. Yager made a highly favorable impression on the faculty, the College administrators, and the trustees. He appeared to be, in every respect, the kind of man who, coming out of the business world, would find himself at home in the academic.

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[1] Included on the Executive Council were Thomas I. Dolan, President, Nash-Kelvinator Div.; John W. Dwyer, President, American Seating Co.; Donald H. Freeman, President, AGM Industries, Inc.; R. V. Paolucci, President, Instrument Division, Lear-Siegler, Inc.; and Robert C. Pew, President, Steelcase, Inc.

[2] Mr. Yager's credentials included a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's in business administration.

Leo Yager came to work at Aquinas on May 1, 1970. On arrival he was thoroughly briefed on the progress made thus far. He was told of the encouragement of the North Central Association administrators, of the favorable response given by two past chairmen of the Engineering Council on Professional Development (the professional accrediting association), of the enthusiastic backing of the business community. He was presented with the preliminary survey of the technical manpower needs conducted by the planning committee. He was quickly integrated into the Aquinas College community, telling testimony of his obvious competence and talents.

The job that lay ahead was prodigious. He had the following tasks to perform: (1) to prepare Aquinas College for the North Central Association preliminary accreditation visit, tentatively scheduled for the spring of 1971; (2) to design an engineering curriculum within the scope of Aquinas' potential capacity and the real needs of the industrial community; (3) to mobilize the materiel resources within the industrial community by way of applying the "brokerage" principle; (4) to integrate the new technical program with the liberal arts curriculum of the College; (5) to recruit jobs in the industrial community in order to put the program on an internship, not just a cooperative, basis; (6) to recruit an *ad hoc* faculty from the business community; and (7) to recruit a first class of engineering students!

A target date of September 1971 was set for the first class in the new instant engineering school. Thus Mr. Yager had sixteen months in which to perform a major miracle. He set to work on May 1, 1970, to see if our projected miracle was indeed feasible.

He began by augmenting the planning committee and galvanizing it into action. He visited a number of engineering schools in the Midwest and East to get some general background. He engaged the services of a North Central Association engineering consultant to visit Aquinas in midsummer. He studied the documents of the ECPD and all other related literature. He thoroughly acquainted himself with the Aquinas College faculty and physical plant.

In mid-July the North Central Association engineering consultant paid his visit to the campus. He spent hours with Mr. Yager reviewing our plans and projections. He met the planning committee and satisfied himself that the support of the industrial community was real. He talked to key members of the administration and was assured that the engineering program would be thoroughly integrated into the curricular structure of the College. Then he went home and wrote his report. It was a good workmanlike engineer's report. It weighed everything carefully and set it all down in order. And it concluded that if Aquinas College wanted an engineering school, that engineering school would have to look, at least in microcosm, very much like a Big Ten engineering school—with permanent faculty, a laboratory on campus, a library of its own, etc.

The second cold wind that blew in the summer of 1970 was the national economy. Particularly hard hit were engineering-oriented industries. The optimism among Grand Rapids industrialists about jobs for engineering interns began to evaporate, and although no one was saying aloud that maybe this was a bad time to start an engineering school, it became markedly more difficult for the Executive Council to raise money to finance the feasibility study.

A second engineering educator, from outside the North Central area, came in October as a curriculum consultant. In his report he wrote:

> The introduction of an engineering program at a small, private, liberal arts college in response to local industry's request and needs is unique. Even more unique is the desire of local industry to work closely with the institution to establish programs of instruction and to share the burden of space and expense. The "brokerage" concept of Aquinas is most appropriate with students involved in "internship" activity while attending classes. Such a concept could very well serve as a model to many well-established engineering programs throughout the country. In fact, it is a wonder to this consultant that such a scheme had not been thought of before. It is obvious that the program described in the prospectus dated March 13, 1970, will be beneficial to Aquinas, participating industries, and the greater Grand Rapids area.[3]

Somewhat reassured by the second consultant's evaluation of our plans, we were now hard at work to meet the November deadline for submitting our documents for preliminary North Central accreditation. A third consultant on library needs filed his report, and Mr. Yager submitted his prospectus. After preliminary statements about the origin of the idea and the need for the school in the community, he turned to the problems of curriculum. The curriculum, he said:

1. must be fully accredited;
2. must provide a student the opportunity of earning a bachelor's degree locally in engineering;
3. must be constructed along work-study lines, so a student can blend academic experience with on-the-job experience and at the same time support a large part of the educational expense;
4. must coincide with local industry needs, and the courses offered tailored, where prudent, to local industry application;
5. must produce a graduate who is versatile and technically broad-based rather than a narrow specialist;
6. must develop moral, ethical and social concepts essential to a satisfying personal philosophy, to a career consistent with public welfare, and to a sound professional attitude;
7. must be scheduled around the student's job and the *ad hoc* faculty's available hours—in other words, at the convenience of the student and the faculty, not the registrar.

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[3] *Self-Study for Preliminary Accreditation,* Aquinas College, November, 1970, Exhibit IX.

With respect to the clientele to be served, Mr. Yager noted several groups in the area which would be interested in the course as a means of entering or advancing in the engineering profession. These groups included junior college transfer students, high school graduates from small towns and farms, blue- and white-collar workers already employed in area industry, veterans, high school graduates in the lower and lower-middle classes, and women not included in the preceding categories.

Mr. Yager went on to describe curriculum, facilities, library, and finances—in terms that were in accordance with the advice of the North Central Association consultant. If to get preliminary accreditation we had to have permanent faculty, a laboratory of our own, etc., then so be it, but we knew that in such an accommodation we were losing all the economies on which the original idea was based. With a sagging national economy to boot we went into the winter of 1970-71 with sinking hopes.

By early April 1971 it was perfectly clear that a new engineering program at Aquinas College was simply not feasible. The facts, which had been discouraging in the fall of 1970, had become even bleaker. Mr. Yager and I took our story to a special meeting of the faculty in mid-April. He laid out the realities in language that was clear, concise, and straightforward. I half-expected the faculty to show relief at the news that we had just about decided to abandon the program. Instead the faculty argued with Mr. Yager at great length that we ought to fight it out, to try every means to get the engineering program launched. It was startling indeed to hear humanists and social scientists holding out for a program that was scarcely at the center of their own interests. Perhaps it was the challenge from the outside implicit in the North Central team's impending visit; more likely it was confidence in Mr. Yager, a truly remarkable man. But the decision to abandon was inevitable.

In retrospect it is easy enough to see what happened to Aquinas College's dream of an instant engineering school. We could not have picked a less auspicious moment, the very eve of a business recession, to start a new, expensive program. This could not have been foreseen. Neither could it have been foreseen that the engineering manpower projections current in 1969 turned out to be grievously askew, partially because of the quick contraction of the aerospace industry in 1970-71 and the new influx of foreign-born engineers at the end of the 1960's, which two factors combined to render all previous projections of need for new engineers highly inflated.

Finally, and probably most importantly, the engineering project did not really trade on the strengths of Aquinas College. Furthermore, this program actually violated the cardinal principle of the "brokered" program, for it set out to *create* a student clientele rather than to *identify* and then to *serve* an existing clientele. Only the "blue-collar and white-collar workers already employed in area industry" qualified as an identifiable existing clientele, and it was not large enough to be the foundation of so expensive a program.

Perhaps it would be more correct to state that if we had to try for a new engineering school, it was fortunate that it had *not* happened when the economy was on the upswing, for then we might have been tempted to go the expensive route prescribed by the consultant and we might have lost everything. Sometimes the best deal is the one that is not made.

What were the consequences of Aquinas' abortive attempt to enter the field of engineering education? First, even in frustration the College caught the attention of the business community. Second, the College suffered no damaging financial loss inasmuch as the whole engineering project had been paid for by Grand Rapids industry. Third, the College was not discredited by the episode; on the contrary, its image as being community-oriented was fortified by the facts in the case. Fourth, the College did not become dispirited, for, among other reasons, the North Central team of examiners commended the College on its inventive approach and encouraged Aquinas to continue to employ the "brokerage" concept.

And what of the people involved? Leo Yager has gone on to a top management post in a new enterprise just launched by one of the Grand Rapids corporations participating in the engineering project. Two of the six members of the Executive Council have become trustees of Aquinas College. And James Sebastian has become one of the staunchest friends Aquinas College has.

Meanwhile Grand Rapids, Michigan, is about to have an engineering degree program to support its industry. Western Michigan University of Kalamazoo, basing its planning and operation on information gathered through the Aquinas feasibility study, is launching a full degree program in Grand Rapids this year. Tax-dollar subsidy will finally become available to provide Grand Rapids industry its needed trained technical manpower. So not even the money contributed by industry has really been lost.

Finally we learned a great deal about the "brokerage" principle, and the lesson was not fatal.

Students in the Encore Program, designed especially for women who return to college to complete their degrees. Seminars taken by the Encore student in her first year tend to be attractive offerings (such as modern drama, contemporary social issues, or comparative religion) particularly suited to the adult student returning to the academic world after a long absence. During their first year, Encore students receive counseling to help them with their transition.

5

Some Experiments That Did Work

Newcomers to the field of community education frequently have two failings. First, they tend to assume that there are clienteles out there somewhere eagerly awaiting any program they have designed to fill a need in the community. Second, if a clientele should emerge for a particular program in response to the educators' wishful thinking or other magic, they then neglect to give adequate counseling. In the first case they are highly unlikely to have any clients at all; in the second they are apt to drive off all but the hardiest.

The first shortcoming can probably be attributed to the educators' natural lack of humility whereby they honestly believe that they know best what people need to learn. The trouble is that many people who need to learn do not know that they do, and many a beautiful community education project wastes its sweetness on the desert air.

The second shortcoming is even less forgivable, for here it is insensitivity, not mere arrogance, which blinds the educators to the adult student's deep need for emotional support as well as professional advice.

Thus newcomers to community education must first define clearly and precisely *an educational need for which there is a known and an accessible clientele.* Then, and only then, should they begin to design a program in response to that need. Then, and only then, should they begin to mobilize the personnel and materiel resources on campus and off. In their designs they must be flexible, accommodating, and realistic, as well as creative. They must be willing to cut the academic red tape, junk the time-honored paraphernalia of registrarial and bursarial procedures, schedule at times and in places that accord with the realities of the prospective student's life and work. In short, they must serve the student as though he or she were a customer rather than a captive.

Now they may reach out to the clientele by means suitable to the particular group they have identified as accessible—e.g., a special mailing list, contacting membership in particular organizations, publicity at the place of employment, etc.

A few examples will make these generalizations come clear.

Where are some identifiable clienteles with known educational needs at the college level? How do we reach them?

EXAMPLE NO. 1

Half the women in America who have attended college have never earned a degree. Many of them, now in their middle years, want preparation for careers or enrichment of their lives, either of which a liberal arts degree can provide. How do we reach them? They are in the PTA's. They are in Great Books programs and book review clubs. They are in church study groups. They are even at home listening to the local radio "personalities" who sell soap. How to reach them is obvious. One goes directly to the PTA, the Great Books organization, the book review clubs and the church study groups and invites them. If they cannot be reached that way, one can be interviewed by the local radio personality. Local newspapers welcome this kind of story on their women's pages, especially in these times of women's lib. The possibilities for free publicity are far-ranging.

EXAMPLE NO. 2

America is full of young people in their late twenties and thirties who dread getting up on Monday morning because they cannot face another week of work that is sheer drudgery. The most obvious way for them to upgrade themselves into more rewarding work is by way of career-oriented collegiate study. Not the function of a liberal arts college? Nonsense. One would be hard put to name very many invisible colleges without at least ten out of fifteen of the following career-oriented sequences of courses already in their catalogs: accounting, education, nursing, communications, pre-law, pre-medical, pre-engineering, pre-dentistry, management, economics, art, theatre, music, home economics, physical education. Where do we locate these quietly desperate young adults? Through their personnel directors, through their unions, through their social organizations, through their churches.

EXAMPLE NO. 3

There are many kinds of skilled workers who need and want the professionalization that credentials can give them, and very often the credential most needed is a baccalaureate degree. Diplomate nurses, social workers, and various health technicians come to mind immediately. They are to be found in their organizations, and very often the organization itself is an active agent in seeking credentials for its members; hence it may be a whole-hearted collaborator in the recruitment process for the appropriate degree program.

EXAMPLE NO. 4

Under-achieving high school students are in need of motivational and remedial programs on Saturdays and in the summer. Their parents are probably the prime clients here. Mere rumors of an effective program in this area are usually enough to generate a clientele of the reluctant young.

EXAMPLE NO. 5

Other late-grade and high school students could greatly profit from enrichment programs in the fine arts and sciences to be taught on Saturdays and in the summers. Grade and high schools are usually quite willing to cooperate in publicizing this kind of enterprise—if the invisible college has a good working relationship with the schools.

EXAMPLE NO. 6

There is not a police force in the country that could not profit from special workshops, as well as full degree programs, in human relations, sociology, psychology, etc.

EXAMPLE NO. 7

Every college has a big population of ex-alumni (former students without a degree) who are in large measure abandoned by their alma mater once they leave the campus. What greater service could be rendered them than an external degree program? Perhaps the second time around they will not drop out. After all, they are much more mature now than they once were. (And if the external degree program works, why not make it available to the ex-alumni of other colleges and universities as well?)

EXAMPLE NO. 8

As the cholesterol count goes up, the pounds add on, and the national awareness of obesity grows, the number of middle-aged business and professional men and women who want and will pay for physical fitness programs increases proportionately. Any invisible college with a gymnasium can put it to good use in off-hours. Printing the news of this available service in the college's basketball and football programs will probably generate the clientele if all else fails.

The list is long. It may be endless. As these complex times become ever more complicated, the educational needs of our people proliferate more rapidly than the educational establishment can meet them. *The very flexibility and celerity with which the small independent college can respond to a need makes it the ideal instrument for community education in our time.*

When it was first proposed to the faculty of Aquinas in February 1969 that two new "degree completion" programs for adults be started in the following fall, the idea was warmly accepted – even when it was explained that adult students had to be dealt with rather differently than regular students. Most members of the faculty had had happy experiences in their occasional contacts with adult students in the past, and they could readily appreciate the values to the college and the community that systematic programs in adult education would have.

The general outlines of the first two programs were presented with considerable confidence because they were patterned after a sound model, the Degree Completion Program of Mundelein College, a Catholic liberal arts institution for women in Chicago. (I had been the Vice-President of Mundelein and had launched the Degree Completion Program there in the fall of 1965.) By 1969 there were more than three hundred mature women in that program with an average of twenty-five graduates a year. The errors we made in the beginning had been corrected, and it was now a self-regenerating program that required little promotion or recruitment effort, for the women in the program told their friends, and the flow of new students was steady. It was a tested prototype for the Aquinas programs.

My principal misgiving was whether programs at Aquinas serving a metropolitan area one-fifteenth the size of Chicago's had a large enough population base on which to build. (This fear was to be soon dissipated, for the very size and congestion of Chicago really restricted our actual market area to one only a bit larger than Greater Grand Rapids.)

In the pages that follow, then, I shall lay out in some detail specific programs which have been designed at Aquinas College for particular clienteles.

EXAMPLE NO. 1 AT AQUINAS: The Encore Program

One of the two new "degree completion" programs for adults presented to the faculty for its approval in February 1969 came to be called "Encore." It was patterned very closely after the Mundelein College Degree Completion Program. Its first director was Ms. Joan Crandall, a young woman who had been teaching in the English Department of the College. She was offered the position for a variety of reasons: (1) she was virtually a prototype of the kind of woman we hoped to attract: (2) she had earned her master's degree on a part-time basis in a manner closely analogous to that of Encore; (3) she had, therefore, a natural empathy for the mature women who were to be the special clientele of the program;

(4) as a member of the under-employed English department she would not have to be replaced—thus the salary of the program administrator was not an added expense but an already existing expenditure in the College's operating budget; and (5) as an English instructor she would have a special advantage as director, for she could teach the basic communications and study skills seminar, the most frequent re-entry point for the mature woman returning to college after many years. (In teaching this course the director gains invaluable insights into the students she will be counseling.) Ms. Crandall proved an excellent choice.

Encore, as a degree completion program for mature women has certain practices designed to meet the peculiar needs of the woman whose youngest child is of school age. In the first year she takes only special seminars that meet just once a week for eight weeks, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., hours during which her children are in school. Thus a woman in Encore may, by taking one course at a time, still earn a minimum of twelve semester hours of credit, one-tenth of the total degree requirement, in her first full academic year. Add those twelve hours to any previously earned college credit, which is liberally evaluated by the registrar, and the typical Encore student (who usually has had a year or more of previous college work) is well into or through the sophomore year. Naturally if she cares to take two seminars at a time during that first year, she may accelerate her progress toward a degree proportionately, but ordinarily the director of the program advises a more deliberate beginning in order to avoid failure and discouragement at the outset.

Encore seminars are taught by the regular full-time members of the Aquinas faculty, frequently senior members. Usually an Encore seminar is taught as part of the professor's regular load, especially if the department offering the seminar is under-employed. Occasionally the seminar is taught on an overload basis, in which case the instructor receives additional compensation, but it is the responsibility of the director to offer teaching assignments to the under-employed members of the faculty first.

The seminars which the Encore student takes in her first year tend to be attractive offerings particularly suited to the adult student just returning to the academic world after a long absence. Modern drama, contemporary fiction, comparative religion, current social issues, history and appreciation of art, psychology, and sociology, among others, have proved successful. These seminars are not really a special curriculum for the Encore student; rather they are re-entry learning experiences. They are restricted to Encore students, not because they are not as rigorous or appropriate for regular late-adolescent students, but because in the beginning many Encore students need the security of being only with their own kind. Most Encore students do not believe they can compete with regular students. In fact, they can and do compete most effectively. By the beginning of the second year the Encore student is gently steered into the mainstream of the college curriculum, and it is rare indeed that she cannot survive in head-to-head competition with the regular student body.

Thus Encore is not so much a curricular program as a counseling program with a modest variety of beginning seminars to assist the new students through the transitional period. By the second year the Encore student is usually well established in the regular curriculum of the College. At this point she may seek so-called "life experience credit." She does this by combing the College catalog for course-offerings the objectives of which she thinks she may have already achieved through some informal learning experience in her past. When she finds such a course description, she petitions the department offering the course and gives all appropriate evidence to support her claim. The department chairman evalutes her petition. He or she may react in one of several ways: disapprove it outright, approve it outright, or approve it provisionally, on the fulfillment of certain conditions—e.g., a written examination, a course of readings, an exercise or a project, an oral examination, etc. If and when the chairman approves the petition, credit is awarded to the Encore student. This credit is ungraded; it is not computed in the student's grade point average; it is entered upon the permanent record of the student and applies fully toward degree requirements. If the Encore student transfers to another college or university, the "life experience credit" is a regular part of the official transcript.

Is "life experience credit" a give-away? By no means. What kind of "life experience" earns credit? Usually it is avocational activities—work in community theatre, art projects, study in Great Books and similar programs. Rarely is a basic course accounted for through the "life experience" procedure—except, occasionally, in modern languages.

An Encore student pays no tuition for credit earned in the manner described. She must pay a modest fee for administrative expenses, the payment of which is no guarantee of receiving credit; also, the fee once paid is not paid a second time no matter how many petitions are submitted. There are cases on record at both Mundelein and Aquinas of women earning as much as twenty-five to fifty semester hours of credit through "life experience," but these are extraordinary cases.

When Ms. Crandall launched Encore in 1969, her first task was to recruit students. During the late spring and summer more than seven thousand Encore brochures were mailed to lists of members of the PTA, the St. Cecilia Society, the YWCA, the medical auxiliary, and the wives of the members of the local bar association. Girl Scout leaders were another favored list. Brochures were also placed in the public library and every beauty parlor in town. Newspaper coverage was excellent, with stories and pictures appearing in the Grand Rapids *Press*, the East Grand Rapids *Almanac*, and the *Negro Times*. The *Aquinas Magazine* carried full coverage in the summer issue, of course. There were spot announcements in several local radio stations, carried on a public service basis. Two radio interviews on popular day-time programs occurred in July. The director became a favorite guest speaker for many women's organizations, and the President never missed an opportunity to mention this program in his public appearances. Two television interviews took place in August. The Welcome Wagon routinely distributed Encore brochures to newcomers in the community. Several churches also distributed brochures.

It will be observed that although promotional activity was vigorous, there is no mention of paid advertising in newspapers or the broadcast media. The reasons are fairly simple: first, that kind of advertising is expensive; second, that kind of advertising is really scattershot and therefore is probably appropriate only for a program whose natural clientele is so dispersed that there is no other way to reach it; third, it is difficult to prove that paid advertising really attracts customers.

As applications came in, the counseling began. The procedure developed at Mundelein College was effectively adapted to the needs of Aquinas. An applicant for admission to Encore is required to fill out a fairly detailed questionnaire, which supplies not only standard information but which also gives the applicant an ample opportunity to spell out her educational and life goals. The final item is a brief essay on her views of a community problem in which she is interested. (This final item is in effect a writing sample and a rather accurate indicator of the applicant's degree of literacy.) The applicant has transcripts of all previous college work sent to the Aquinas registrar for evaluation.

When the transcripts are received and evaluated, the director invites the applicant to come to the College. On arrival she takes a reading and vocabulary test (the Ohio State Psychological Test), a remarkably reliable indicator and predictor of the applicant's ability to do college-level work. Finally the counseling interview occurs. Armed with the evaluated transcripts, the questionnaire responses, and the test results, the director is well prepared to begin her conversation with the applicant. It may range far and wide over the woman's past life and future aspirations. There are many clues in that conversation as to where the woman ought to re-enter academic life—or, sometimes, it becomes obvious that she ought not be returning to college at all, that some other activity would really be more appropriate. At least one applicant in six is advised to go elsewhere, often to specific programs outside Aquinas College. The purpose of the interview is not to recruit students at all costs but to screen out those applicants with a poor chance of success.

At last the applicant is either admitted or counseled to go elsewhere. If admitted, she is ready for her first seminar. The director and the new Encore student select this first learning experience very carefully, for a failure at this juncture could be ruinous. Not only the course matter but the instructor is of the utmost importance. The director has to make some very astute judgments in helping the new student make her re-entry.

By the end of the second year of Encore Ms. Crandall left to return to graduate school and we invited Ms. Jane Idema, who had been a part-time English instructor in the local junior college, to take over the program. Her arrival on the scene coincided with what I have come to recognize as the second phase of this kind of degree completion program for mature women. As it happened at Mundelein College in the third and fourth years, a significant change in the student constituency is occurring in the third year at Aquinas. The first wave of women to come to Mundelein was almost exclusively housewives, median age a bit over forty; the second wave, to appear in the third and fourth years, included many more working women, median age three or four years younger. The same phenomenon is now taking place at Aquinas. As Encore become better known in the community, more and more working women, somewhat younger on the average than the charter members in the program, have come back to college. Their time requirements are quite different, but otherwise they have the same needs, aspirations, and problems that the first wave of students had. Aquinas College could not have accommodated working women if it had not already had its Career Action program, an evening degree completion program (see Example No. 2, below), in operation; it has been a relatively simple matter to expand the course offerings to meet the scheduling needs of these working women in Encore.

Ms. Idema tailored her thinking to conform to the realities. As more working women entered the program, she has refocused her promotion and recruitment efforts to reach into the places where they work. As her latest report states, "I would like to talk to key personnel directors in companies which are feeling the hot breath of Revised Order No. 4." There could be no more apt illustration of "an acute sense of serendipity," mentioned back in Chapter 3!

EXAMPLE NO. 2 AT AQUINAS: The Career Action Program

The second of the two degree completion programs for adults to be begun by Aquinas College in the fall of 1969 was christened "Career Action." It was frankly career-oriented and pragmatic in design. On the face of it, it was a departure for this liberal arts college to enter the field of vocational education–but only on the face of it. Aquinas College, like most other invisible colleges, had really been in the business of educating young people to make a living ever since its beginning. Of the fifteen career-oriented disciplines mentioned earlier in this chapter, Aquinas offers thirteen, and certainly it has always taken great pride in its graduates who went on to distinguish themselves in these fields. Why, then, not make the most of the already available curricular resources and degree programs that existed at the College? Why not combine them with some conscientious career and academic counseling into a program that would serve very specifically the needs of a readily identifiable clientele?

Pragmatic in design, Aquinas' Career Action Program imparts occupational skills to area residents. Unlike many adult-education programs, however, it is a credit program leading to a degree. Above are students in an evening business class; below, an instructor checks a student's work in a health-technician class.

Career Action is as unlike those familiar, exquisitely fashioned, non-credit adult education programs as an education program can be. It is a *credit* program. It leads to a *degree*. As its midpoint it offers a *certificate*. It never misses an opportunity to confer a credential. All this documentary testimony of the progress of our students is useful to them; the least we can do is to help.

The first director of Career Action was Dr. Ralph Bennett, acting chairman of the department of economics and business administration. No reluctant appointee he, Dr. Bennett had been campaigning for an evening program in business administration for several years; when the opportunity to direct Career Action appeared, he eagerly volunteered to take on the job. During his remarkable incumbency Career Action grew from scratch into one of the most successful programs of its kind. By the end of the 1971-72 academic year more than five hundred students had entered the program, and the number has continued to grow under the leadership of a new director. Today there are more than seven hundred students in the program.

In academic features Career Action closely resembles the Encore program. Based on the assumption that its clientele is the young-to-middle-aged working man or woman, Career Action has its classes scheduled in the evening hours. There is a further assumption that in the beginning the working person returning to College study may not be willing or able to give more than one evening a week to class. Career Action classes, therefore, usually meet once each week for a four-hour period. In order to accelerate the Career Action student's progress toward the degree, Dr. Bennett asked permission to use four twelve-week "quadmesters" each year instead of the two standard sixteen-week semesters plus six-week summer session. Thus a Career Action student could, by going to class only one evening a week for a year, earn twelve semester hours of credit; by going two evenings a week, he or she could earn twenty-four, but, as in the case of Encore, the director of Career Action tended to counsel taking only one course at a time, especially at the beginning. An adult may burn up in the academic atmosphere on re-entry.

Career Action, unlike Encore, is a full curricular program. Whereas Encore students are carried into the regular curriculum of the College by means of several special transitional seminars in the first year, Career Action students want and receive practical business courses in accounting, management, marketing, business law, and economics from the beginning. Very often they can upgrade their job competence almost as soon as they enter the program. Desire for promotion is a powerful motive.

The faculty of Career Action, therefore, had to come in part from outside the College even at the beginning. Dr. Bennett was the first at Aquinas to make a major application of the "brokerage" concept by going into the business community to recruit first-rate practitioners to teach the practical courses in the Career Action curriculum. More theoretical courses, however, are usually taught by regular members of the full-time faculty. Thus, not only are students receiving the best of two worlds, but those two worlds also meet in the faculty lounge for mutual enrichment.

To say that Career Action is a full curricular program is not to suggest that it puts any less emphasis on good counseling than does Encore. Dr. Bennett spent many hundreds of man-hours on counseling each student individually at least once each quadmester. No less insecure than the women in Encore, the men and women in Career Action need every possible support, especially during the critical first year in the program and at various times of crises thereafter.

"Life experience credit" is managed in the Career Action program precisely as it is in Encore.

Promotion and recruitment for Career Action were somewhat different from the efforts for Encore. Whereas the potential Encore student was identified by way of her participation in certain kinds of activities or by means of her personal identity, the potential Career Action student was to be found through his or her work. Therefore Dr. Bennett aimed his immense energy and persuasive talents at the personnel and training directors of Grand Rapids industry. Instead of mailing brochures to prospects he left brochures with these personnel people to be distributed to the employees. He made no fewer than 125 such company contacts between March and July, 1969, thus distributing more than six thousand brochures. College counselors and department heads at several junior colleges and business colleges were also approached and apprised of the possibilities for their students if they wanted to work on for a degree.

The Grand Rapids *Press* gave good coverage to the program, and as an experiment Dr. Bennett placed some very inexpensive advertisements in the personal column of the *Press*, with good results. Both radio and television gave excellent exposure to the program through interviews. Meanwhile Dr. Bennett worked indefatigably, talking to everyone who might become a student or who knew someone who might become a student.

Applications began to pour into the College by mid-summer. The process followed by Dr. Bennett was much the same as that being used by Ms. Crandall in Encore. Instead of the Ohio State Psychological Test, he used the School and College Aptitude Test, but otherwise the same techniques were used to screen applicants and to make some prediction as to their likelihood of succeeding. The motives of applicants tended to be more clear-cut than in Encore, but otherwise there was marked similarity between the counseling processes of the two programs. Academic advising in Career Actions is, on the whole, simpler than it is in Encore because Career Action has only a few curricular routes to a business degree whereas Encore may have as many curricular channels to be piloted as there are sequences in the College catalog.

The contact between the Career Action student and the director of the program is a continuing one and a somewhat more constant one than that between Encore student and director. The reason is that the Career Action director is in effect both dean and department chairman to the student throughout his or her career at Aquinas. Further, being an evening student, the man or woman in Career Action has less involvement in the regular daytime world of the College.

Quite as interesting as the students are the adjunct faculty members who have come to Aquinas College through the Career Action program. Typical adjunct teachers are probably first taken to be unemployable by an invisible college. They have all the necessary academic credentials for undergraduate teaching. They have a wide range of real-world experience. They prove that they can be competent teachers. Yet they are seen as unemployable because their salary requirements are usually much higher than those of most undergraduate college teachers. But they teach in Career Action because, even as practicing professionals, they still have a strong desire to teach what they have learned about their professions in practicing them. The beneficiaries clearly are the students—but not they alone, for regular members of the Aquinas faculty also have an opportunity to associate with the practitioners, for the mutual benefit of both.

Finally, then, for all to achieve maximum benefit from the presence of the adjunct faculty, these "outsiders" must become "insiders" through careful integration. Instead of being forever "lecturers," that anomalous designation of the transient member of the faculty, they should perhaps be accorded ranks of "adjunct instructor," "adjunct assistant professor," etc., as they advance in experience and merit and professional competence. Adjunct rank should be more than a new euphemism; it should have real meaning within the seniority system of the institution. Advancements in adjunct rank should add perquisites and authority in decision-making within the legislative apparatus of the school. Once again, the devising of such a system will require a statesmanlike act on the part of the regular faculty, for such recognition of adjunct faculty may well be seen to be some erosion of the regular faculty's authority and dignity. Yet the Aquinas faculty discovered that sharing some of its decision-making authority with the students (at the end of the Self-Study) did not dilute its own; rather that sharing led the College closer to being a true community than it had been before.

Early in the 1971-72 academic year, Dr. Bennett asked to be relieved of the directorship of the Career Action program as soon as an adequate replacement could be found. He felt, with justification, that the program was securely launched and self-sustaining, and he wanted to return to his real love, teaching. The success of Career Action indicated that Dr. Bennett's successor ought to be a full-time continuing education administrator so that he or she could build on the base of Career Action, coordinate the other continuing education programs in the College, and launch new programs as occasions presented themselves.

Mr. William Parker, who accepted our offer, appeared to have an extraordinary combination of the talents and characteristics we thought right for the new post of Director of Community Education. He had the academic credentials in accounting to give him status with the regular faculty, he had the business experience to give him special insights into the problems and promise of Career Action (the foundation stone of the new Community Education division), and he had the administrative experience in continuing education to enable him to move out from the already existing programs at the College to new ones. He also had the aggressiveness and drive to break out into new educational markets and the inventiveness to capitalize on opportunities.

EXAMPLE NO. 3 AT AQUINAS

The existence of Encore and Career Action has made it possible for Aquinas College to respond to certain skilled workers who feel the need for professionalization and enrichment through degree completion. Specifically Grand Rapids, a major medical center but until this year without a collegiate school of nursing, has a large number of diplomate nurses desiring a baccalaureate degree. It was pointed out by Mr. Daniel Pilon, staff assistant to the President, that these nurses who have had three intensive years of nursing education were normally receiving fewer than twenty semester hours of college credit toward a degree in most colleges and universities. When he also discovered that they tested out as equal in their nursing skills to nurses with standard four-year nursing degrees, it seemed a small concession for Aquinas to award sixty-four semester hours of credit to the diplomate nurse who becomes a baccalaureate degree candidate. Needless to say, she or he cannot earn a nursing degree at Aquinas, but all these people will be the better for their new degrees, on the job, at home, and in the community.

EXAMPLE NO. 4 AT AQUINAS: The College Expectations Program

In the summer of 1970–in the lull following the end of the Self-Study–a new program was launched at Aquinas College in response to a recommendation that came out of the Study. One of the teams of Aquinas visitors which had gone exploring that March had come home with the story of a remarkable remedial learning center at an Ohio college. The team members went back into their study groups full of enthusiasm for such a center at Aquinas–to serve Aquinas students during the academic year and to serve the general public during the summer.

The most effective counselor of students with academic problems was generally conceded to be Mr. Paul Nelson, the assistant academic dean. He had come to Aquinas from an excellent boys' high school in Cincinnati the year before, and he was indeed gifted with special skills in counseling the "slow" student. He agreed to take on the new remedial learning center and to try it on an experimental basis that summer for a group of local high school students. He spent several days at the Ohio college to see how its learning center functioned. He came home full of ideas of his own.

The new program we named "College Expectations Program." It was aimed at the high school sophomore or junior who was not sure whether he or she could make it in college or, in fact, whether he or she wanted to go to college at all. Mr. Nelson conferred at length with the counselors of several parochial and public high schools in the Grand Rapids area to see if they believed there was any value in or demand for a program designed to help a high school student who is probably an under-achiever discover something about his or her fitness for college. The response of the counselors was highly affirmative–and somewhat apologetic, for they admitted that their own school systems should probably be doing this job. But the fact of the matter was that nobody in Grand Rapids at that time was doing the job. The vacuum begged to be filled, and Aquinas felt that it had the resources available to do the job.

The counselors were immensely helpful in providing mailing lists for the Aquinas brochure, and they promised to pass the word about the program on to those students who they knew needed it. It was recognized that the very students who probably needed the program most were not very likely to be willing to give up six weeks of their summer vacation to do what they liked least doing. Accordingly it became a tacit understanding that in a sense the client of this program was to be the concerned parent, at least in a secondary way. We knew that if we wanted to reach the real client, the under-achieving high school sophomore or junior, we probably had to do so through his or her parents.

The program itself began to take shape. We knew, first of all, that we had a numerous and talented faculty at our disposal for the experiment. The congregation of Dominican Sisters, who are the rock on which Aquinas College was built, let it be known that there were at least ten or more experienced and talented high school teachers in their ranks who were willing to contribute their summers to the project. Meanwhile Mr. Nelson had recruited another dozen administrators and teachers at Aquinas, all of whom were willing to try their hands at remedial education. With such riches on tap, the director of College Expectations began to consult with his colleagues on the design of the program itself. Among them they agreed that the crucial ingredients ought to be the following: (1) an admissions counseling service; (2) a testing service; (3) a study skills seminar; (4) a career counseling service; (5) general supportive counseling to get at the root of the motivational problem; (6) a college-selection counseling service; and (7) some substantive learning experiences, at least one of which would be at the collegiate level (for which college credit would be earned and held "in escrow" for the student until he or she entered college).

The College Expectations Program gave high-school students an opportunity to sample college life so that they could decide if they wanted to attend college. Above, a young Grand Rapids citizen inspects computer hardware.

The notion was that for five mornings a week for six weeks—with afternoons left open for special conferences and problem-solving—the CEP student would go through a series of individual and group experiences designed to get at his or her problem as an academic animal. Ultimately, if it appeared that he or she was indeed capable of doing college-level work, he or she and the parents would spend a day with the staff of the Aquinas College admissions office to help the youngster pick an appropriate college. The ground rules were strict; the admissions office people, professional recruiters though they were, were strictly enjoined against selling Aquinas College to the student.

By mid-June, when the first CEP class had been recruited, there was dissatisfaction among the Dominican Sister volunteers because they felt that too many of the CEP students were middle-class and upper-middle-class and too few were disadvantaged. Mr. Nelson spent an arduous ten days trying to bring the number of disadvantaged up to acceptable levels—on a free tuition basis. The curious phenomenon of being unable to give away what we had been selling for $180 (plus the cost of materials) was a highly instructive lesson that was later to serve us in good stead as we moved toward a Black Studies Program, but that is another story.

At any rate, by the end of June we were ready to go, and the forty-odd students who lived through the first summer of College Expectations were treated to a remarkable learning experience—for themselves and their teachers. Now, two years later, as we look back to that first summer, we may question some of the things we did, but the results, even in the beginning, were gratifying.

Not every CEP story has a happy ending. One student in four drops out or persists until the end but to no visible purpose. Some make superficial progress but regress once out of the supportive atmosphere of the program. But many find themselves—even in the reverse sense, as some students find that college is not really for them. These are the success stories of CEP, and they occur often enough to warrant this unorthodox service of a liberal arts college to the community in which it is located.

Where do you find a Paul Nelson? It should be easy. He describes himself simply as someone who hated school himself!

EXAMPLE NO. 5 AT AQUINAS: Saturday Classes

In the course of the Self-Study, Ms. Winifred Lutz, a young member of the art department who was keenly attuned to the students, came up with an interesting idea. Why not put senior art and science students to work as instructors of enrichment courses for junior high school students? It would provide the Aquinas student with useful experience in teaching. It would be a stimulating learning experience for the young students, giving them a taste of the arts and sciences in a learning-by-doing format—in a college setting. Inasmuch as it was not to be offered except as a supplementary program, not involving academic credit, and inasmuch as the admission fee (to be distributed to the student-teacher) was to be modest, there could not be any criticism of the program on ethical grounds. In general, it was seen as a break-even operation for the College in which all participants would have something to gain.

And that is just the way it worked out. More than a hundred youngsters from the neighboring public and parochial schools gathered on campus on Saturday mornings during the regular school year. Obviously they enjoyed themselves immensely. The student-teachers made discoveries about themselves as they came in contact with early teen-agers in the studio and laboratory. As all worthy educational programs should be, the "Saturday Classes" were a learning experience for everyone involved.

EXAMPLE NO. 6 AT AQUINAS: Workshop for Local Police

The arrival of a young political science instructor who had written his doctoral dissertation on the relationship between the police of a Southern city and its black population triggered another idea. With federal Law Enforcement Education Program funds available to pay the tuition for the police-officer students in the program, Dr. Donald Norris assured himself of his clientele and then designed a program to meet its needs. Twenty-nine police supervisors drawn from the Greater Grand Rapids area and the state police spent a month of intensive study with a faculty including members of Aquinas' regular staff and outside experts assembled for the workshop. Three semester hours of credit, under the Urban Studies rubric, were earned by the participants in this Summer 1971 seminar-workshop dealing with the problems of police-community relations.

The arrival of another young instructor in the following fall, this man a sociologist who had been a Michigan State Trooper, promises an interesting expansion and extension of the program begun by Dr. Norris.

The question may be raised about the appropriateness of this kind of workshop in a liberal arts college. Who would contend that it is not a worthy end to help in the creation of a humane constabulary? And what is one of the proud claims of the liberal arts but that they are humanizing forces in an unjust and unfeeling world?

EXAMPLE NO. 7 AT AQUINAS: I. D. E. A.

Breathes there the college, with soul so invisible, which never to itself hath said, "You know, we really ought to do something for our alumni?" So it does something immediately; it sends out another fund-raising letter, offering them still one more opportunity to support alma mater. Ask not what your alumni can do for you, but what can you do for your alumni. Or, better still, your ex-alumni. (Now back to the third person . . .)

The Summer of 1970 was the season in which the College Expectations Program was instituted. The Summer of 1971 was the season in which

Aquinas had its first Summer School Without Walls. Both were the product of the innovative skill of Assistant Dean Paul Nelson. Whereas the first became the prototype of the year-round learning services center for all Aquinas students who wanted special assistance, the second was the forerunner of Aquinas College's external degree program, now called IDEA (acronym for Individually Designed Education for Adults).

When Aquinas College first became interested in a remote tutorial program in the spring of 1971, it went to the source, Goddard College, which has a highly sophisticated special adult external degree program. Paul Nelson and I went to Plainfield, Vermont, to talk to William Hamlin and Richard Hathaway. Generous and communicative, they told us of their experiences in depth and with absolute candor. Our own experience with independent study at Aquinas gave us some grounds for understanding, and, coupled with our now extensive experience in adult education, their revelations put matters into perspective. Our intention was twofold: first, to try out the independent study format and academic contract idea in the 1971 summer school; and second, to expand the summer session experience into a full-blown external degree program during the 1971-72 academic year. What our colleagues at Goddard had reaffirmed, of course, was our conviction that the heart of any effective adult program, especially so lonely an experience as an external degree program, had to be intensely personalized counseling.

The 1971 Summer School Without Walls was, first of all, an attempt to stop the steady erosion of Aquinas' summer program. With high tuition and no air-conditioning, regular summer classes at Aquinas had been falling off year by year until they almost disappeared in the Summer of 1970 (hence the free faculty time with which to try the College Expectations Program!). Second, Mr. Nelson was convinced that independent study on a wide scale might be just what was needed. First, he spread the word among our own students; then he sent an attractive brochure to every college and university in the country where we even suspected there might be students whose homes were in Grand Rapids; third, he advertised in the student newspapers of those colleges and universities where we knew there were large numbers of Grand Rapids students.

The results were gratifying. Summer enrollment more than doubled. Many faculty members who in other summers would have been without employment were engaged to work out the academic contracts and serve as tutors. Departments which had never given serious thought to unconventional modes of instruction now found themselves becoming involved in new ways of teaching–not without some anguish, it should be noted. One department arbitrarily laid down the principle that a student would have to read four books for every semester hour of credit contracted for; another demanded unending written reports of work accomplished. Others, however, caught the spirit of independent study and saw its potential for permitting the student to earn credit while engaged in extraordinary learning experiences: a report of summer work done in the local juvenile court, a detailed account and critique of art works seen in the course of a summer's travel through the cities of Italy, a study of the service being rendered by a social service agency, the writing of a *novella*, the preparation of a series of lectures on death and dying to student nurses (taped for evaluation by the instructor), the preparation of slides (with narration) of Greek and Cretan ruins (for archeology credit), readings on fascism by a student traveling in Germany and Italy, etc.

So satisfactory were the results of that first Summer School Without Walls that we knew, half-way through the session, that the principles we were learning could and should be applied to a wider clientele than Grand Rapids college students on summer vacation. We were reasonably certain that we did not want to compete directly with Goddard for an elite national adult clientele, but we did believe that we could offer a valuable educational service of the kind Goddard had pioneered to some special adult clienteles which already had some affinity for Aquinas: first, our own ex-alumni; second, those Encore and Career Action students who left the Grand Rapids area but wanted to continue work on their degrees (really special kinds of ex-alumnae and ex-alumni); and third, the ex-alumni of other colleges and universities who might need the special features of an external degree program to continue their studies.

Another departure we made from the Goddard model was to offer external degree study on a course-by-course basis rather than on a six-month module (equivalent to a full semester) basis. Otherwise we intended to retain several other features of Goddard's admirable adult degree program: its intensive personal counseling; its socialization of a number of individual students into a cohesive group; its project-orientation in the making of academic contracts.

The experience the Aquinas faculty had gained during the summer of 1971 was the foundation on which the new external degree program at Aquinas was to be built. It was evident that such a program could only come into being if the faculty really believed in it and would make the necessary adjustments in their thinking. Dean Nelson reported a high level of interest and generally strong cooperation among the faculty in Summer School Without Walls. We were encouraged to continue.

As always, the first problem was the discovery of a director. Dean Nelson had far too many other activities to take on even one more, and so we began our search elsewhere in the college. Dr. Robert Clarke, chairman of the political science department, qualified in every way: he had just been promoted to full professor; he was widely respected by other faculty members of all ages; he had a reputation as an innovative teacher, who had been sending his students into the community for special learning experiences for several years; he was willing to launch the program for Aquinas although he made it clear from the beginning that his primary long-range interest lay in teaching, not administration.

He held the leadership of the program until June 1972, at which time Sister Harriet Sanborn of the Education Department became available to assume the duties of director of the program. Sister Sanborn brought special qualities to the task. Her years in preparing young people to enter secondary education as teachers had sharpened her interest in new teaching techniques and new modes of learning. Being very well read in these areas, she was eager to try some of these theories. This program was ideal for someone with Sister Sanborn's predilection for careful experimentation.

The title of the program became IDEA, the acronym, "*I*ndividually *D*esigned *E*ducation for *A*dults." The brochures were printed in November and distributed in December 1971. The mailing lists were our own ex-alumni and ex-alumnae, those of other colleges willing to cooperate, and the names of all former Encore and Career Action students. Publicity releases were sent to every daily and weekly newspaper in Michigan, many of which carried the story. Dr. Clarke, a personable man, was a frequent guest on radio and television interview programs on Michigan stations. On the whole, IDEA got excellent start-up publicity. The timing was less than ideal—mid-winter and post-holidays—but it seemed desirable not to wait until the following September, when education fever would be running high in the land again. IDEA was simply too good to keep.

How good an idea is IDEA? These are its features, as set down in the recruitment brochure:

> WHO CAN ATTEND? Any mature adult beyond the normal college age, who has the capacity to do college work. If you have had previous college experience you can pick up where you left off. Previous college-level work will be carefully evaluated. If you have had no previous college experience, you will take tests which will indicate your aptitude and abilities and will assist the counselor in helping you design your educational program. You can live anywhere in the U.S. and still enroll in IDEA since the program is based on independent study.
>
> HOW DOES IT WORK? There can be as many study programs as there are students because your schedule of courses is tailor-made to match your interests, your educational goals and the time you have available. A counselor will work with you; together you will draw up an educational plan. After careful counseling and program planning on the Aquinas campus, you will meet with the professor of the course (or courses) you have selected. IDEA study may consist of readings, research, work-study, travel, investigation and analysis, or some combination of these. You may, with the approval of the professor, design an academic program of study which best fits your needs.
>
> For each course a memorandum of agreement is drawn up between the professor and the student. The agreement includes: a description of the course or project; the amount of credit to be earned; the schedule for completion; a preliminary bibliography or list of resources; the method of evaluation and the method of reporting (i.e., phone, letter, tape, personal meetings). The agreement, signed by the student and the professor and filed with the Director, is mutually binding.

HOW MUCH TIME MUST I SPEND ON CAMPUS? When you enroll in IDEA you spend two or three days on campus for orientation, counseling, advising, course selection and working out your program with your professors. Upon completion of your agreement, you will return to the campus for final evaluation and planning for the next part of your program. On-campus housing will be available for a nominal fee.

IS THE IDEA DEGREE DIFFERENT FROM THE REGULAR B.A.? No—only the method by which it is earned.

WHEN MAY I START? Today, tomorrow, next month—IDEA operates under an admissions policy which gives you maximum flexibility. The agreement method of independent study gives you the option of designing your own "semesters," beginning and ending according to the agreement. It is understood that circumstances may arise causing you to drop out for a while; your standing is not endangered and you can resume your program whenever you are able.

IDEA also offers its students the same opportunities for "life experience credit" the Encore and Career Action programs do.

Will IDEA succeed? It is too early to say with any degree of certainty. By June 1973, there were sixty-five registrants with a degree commitment. The preliminary feeling is that, minimally, IDEA will be a valuable and a valid educational service for ex-alumni and an invaluable adjunct service to complement the Encore and Career Action programs. It may indeed develop into a strong autonomous program.

EXAMPLE NO. 8 AT AQUINAS: Campus Health Club

Aquinas College has a practically new field house that had virtually no users every afternoon between five and seven o'clock—until the fall of 1970. Phillip Kahler, the director of athletics, suggested that if we would install a sauna in an available basement area, print a brochure describing our athletic facilities, and distribute it in the right places, we could perform a good health service, make friends, and do better than break even financially. He was right. The first group of customers, which had to be limited to 130 because that was the number of available lockers, paid for the sauna three times over the first year. Today the Campus Health Club has a regular waiting list—a list, by the way, that includes many successful business and professional men and women who have in consequence become friends and supporters of the College. (Somehow it seems immoral to do well by doing good . . .)

As we said, several thousand words ago, the list is long, and it may indeed be endless—the list of opportunities available to an invisible college. The key to the successful exploitation of these opportunities is the discovery of accessible clienteles with particular educational needs.

How should the invisible college go about finding these clienteles? By employing special staff or by retooling existing staff to analyze the educational needs of the community in which the college is located. But, it may be objected, unless the college is so fortunate as to find this kind of specialist already present on the staff, money will have to be invested in new staff.

Let us assume, then, that the invisible college in question is unfortunate in having no community education specialists. What should it do?

Probably there is no drearier form of writing known to Twentieth-Century man than Foundation Proposal Prose, especially Foundation Proposal Prose that has failed to extract any money from the Foundation. So be it. Offered herewith, notwithstanding, is one page of a proposal that did *not* bring appreciative tears to the eyes of any foundation executives, or if it did, there was still no money forthcoming.

> ### A New Kind of Community College
>
> This is how we intend to create this new kind of community college. We hope, with the help of the Foundation in the beginning, to invent a mechanism whereby we can discover the real continuing educational needs of the community. Let us call it the Educational Problem Clinic. We shall staff it with two counselors (one of whom will be a woman especially attuned to the needs and problems of the contemporary woman in society). Both counselors will be experienced in psychological techniques to enable them to make appropriate referrals, even for therapy when such is indicated. Both counselors will also be *totally informed of all available educational and training programs in our area* so that they will be able to make an immediate educational referral, not merely give generalized advice to the client.
>
> The third person in the Clinic will be the director. He or she plays the role of educational broker. He or she will be assisted by a specialist in the design of short courses, special seminars, workshops, and all manner of *ad hoc* programs as they may be needed.
>
> This is how the Clinic will operate. A client will come seeking a solution to his or her educational problem. He or she may be discontented with his or her present situation, perhaps he or she may even be in the market for a new career. He or she will be interviewed in depth by the counselor, tested as appropriate, and his or her need diagnosed. He or she may then be referred to an existing educational or training service in the community, or to a professional or commercial personnel service—or, if the client's needs cannot be served by any of these, his or her need will be referred to the Director. The Director will determine if the client's need is common to others; if so, he or she can then begin to function as a broker—to mobilize the personnel and materiel resources of the community to meet the educational need of the group thus discovered.
>
> Thus two purposes are served. The client has access to information, counseling, and programs he or she cannot find on his or her own. The College, meanwhile, has on-going market research into the continuing educational needs of every segment of the community. The College, serving as broker (through the agency of the Clinic Director), is then able to create educational programs not invented on the basis of intuition but of certain knowledge. Both the public and the College are well served. The College indeed becomes a new kind of community college, *not in competition* with any existing institution or agency, but rather filling educational voids (at the college level) as they appear and only for as long as they are there. Flexibility, economy, efficiency, and sensitivity to the continually changing needs of the modern world will be the hallmarks of the Clinic's function and the College's services.

> **This College has no intention of trying to be all things to all persons; on the contrary, it intends to steer clients to existing services and only to fill gaps in those services as it is appropriate for a private liberal arts college to do so.**

Any invisible college administrator is now free to try out that page of prose on his or her favorite foundation. It did not work for Aquinas, but it may be that Aquinas picked the wrong foundation.

Effectiveness of the appeal aside, the significant point is that, buried in the presentation, is an idealized bureaucratic device for doing educational market research in a population center at or somewhere near the size of Grand Rapids. There may well be other and better devices, but had Aquinas been successful in its appeal to this particular foundation, it would have had a highly serviceable mechanism for finding new clienteles.

As a matter of fact, Aquinas College has had to do its searching on its own. It has had to gamble some of its operational funds to hire a specialist in community education to serve as its principal "broker." As related above, when Dr. Bennett resigned as director of Career Action in 1971, we used the open half-slot in the College's administrative table of organization as the aperture in which to install Mr. Parker, the specialist. Thus only a second half-slot was added to the over-all administrative structure. Mr. Parker has now been called upon to improvise from within the College roster of personnel a bureau capable of becoming the Educational Problem Clinic. At this early date there is already considerable evidence that it will succeed.

Aquinas College seems well on its way to becoming a "new kind of community college"–without benefit of foundation subsidy.

6

The Economics of Community Education

"But when all is said and done," the skeptic will say (being a skeptic, he or she will be given to using just such a cliché), "how supportive of the operating budget is your community education programming?"

Very.

Let us review the economics of community education. First, the regular faculty of the College is more fully employed, hence more "productive." Second, the administration is more fully employed, thus lightening the overhead by spreading it more thinly. Third, the administration is more effectively deployed, hence more "productive." Fourth, in certain programs (e.g., Encore), otherwise empty seats in classrooms are filled by students paying full tuition, thus increasing income without any significant increase in expenditures. Fifth, off-hour programs (e.g., Career Action, Saturday Classes, and Campus Health Club) are making use of facilities when they would otherwise be vacant. Sixth, programs requiring special facilities (e.g., Campus Health Club, Saturday Classes, and Creative Leisure) are making fuller use of these particular facilities. Seventh, programs which are built on adjunct faculty (e.g., Career Action) are run on a variable-cost basis, thus insuring against loss. And eighth, the addition of part-time students (thereby increasing the FTE count) at a proportionately higher rate than part-time faculty significantly raises the student-faculty ratio (at Aquinas we raised the student-faculty ratio from 12.5-to-1 to 17-to-1 in four years).[1] In summary both people and facilities are more fully used—and when out-of-pocket expenses are incurred, they are invariably offset by income in excess of those expenditures. This kind of programming has to be budget-supportive.

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[1] See graph p. 4 above.

Of all the programs outlined in Chapter 5, Encore and Career Action are the best established and have the longest histories. Accordingly, we shall look at the income and expenditures for these two programs over the four years of their existence to see how the economics really works.

Both Encore and Career Action held their first classes in September 1969. The tuition charge in each program was $35 per credit hour (raised to $45 per credit hour in September 1970, at which level it continues today). Income figures given in Table 1 are entirely from tuition. The expenditure figures represent out-of-pocket expenditures–i.e., payments of cash that would not have been made if the programs had not existed. Thus there is no expenditure recorded for instruction in a given course if the instructor is a full-time member of the faculty who is teaching the course as part of his or her regular teaching load–a common occurrence in the Encore program. If, however, the instructor is teaching the course on an overload basis, the extra compensation he or she receives is an expenditure charged to the program. And obviously if the instructor is an adjunct member of the faculty, his or her compensation is charged as an expenditure.

Let us look at the Encore program first.

TABLE 1

Encore Program Income and Expenditures, 1969-73

		FY 1970		**FY 1971**		**FY 1972**		**FY 1973**
Income		$22,989		$31,048		$52,212		$92,382
Expenditures								
Instruction	2,000		3,851		1,833		5,110	
Administration	12,548	14,548	11,929	15,780	12,050	13,883	12,078	17,188
Excess of Income over Expenditures		$ 8,441		15,268		$38,329		$75,194
Return on Cash Investment		58%		97%		276%		437%

As can be seen, then, Encore was not only self-sufficient from the beginning but it was actually supportive of the College budget, making a substantial 58% return in its first year, rising to an amazing 437% in the fourth year. It will be noted that while income was increasing substantially during this four-year period, expenditures remained fairly constant. The key to this performance is, of course, that the cost of instruction was very low. Most of it was, in one way or another, prepaid. The instructors in the special Encore seminars were in almost every case regular full-time members of the faculty who taught the seminars as part of their regular teaching loads. As Encore students moved into their second and third years, they occupied seats in regular classes that otherwise would have been empty. Hence the out-of-pocket cost of instruction was minimal, and as the program grew, so did its income but *not* its expenditures.

Now let us look at the Career Action program.

TABLE 2

Career Action Program Income and Expenditures, 1969-1973

		FY 1970		FY 1971		FY 1972		FY 1973
Income		$93,522		$158,535		$178,461		$276,933
Expenditures								
Instruction	19,903		35,981		31,117		66,340	
Administration	10,426	30,329	15,550	51,531	25,284	56,401	34,532	100,872
Excess of Income over Expenditures		$63,193		$107,004		$122,060		$176,061
Return on Cash Investment		208%		208%		216%		175%

Career Action, it will be remembered, is the first of the "brokered" programs--i.e., a program in which the College engages a substantial adjunct faculty to augment the regular full-time faculty. It is a program operated on a variable-cost basis. Thus, as it can be seen, the rate of return started out immediately in excess of 200% and has remained at approximately that level to the present. Whereas Encore with its minimal instruction cost and its fairly constant administrative costs showed an astonishing increase in its rate of return, Career Action started out at a high level and stayed close to that level, and it would probably continue to do so no matter whether the volume of the program increased, decreased, or held steady. It is in the very nature of a variable-cost program to behave just so.

Again, it may be pointed out that the total four-year expenditure for advertising for Career Action was only $985.

To isolate Encore and Career Action from the full list of community education programs offered by Aquinas College may well seem a selective process that highlights successes, thereby distorting the total picture. Encore and Career Action have been, to be sure, the most successful programs attempted at Aquinas—they also happen to be the first programs and thus have the longest history. Yet to dispel the impression that they are anomalous let us put them into context. Let us see what difference this kind of programming has made in the financial operations of Aquinas College. (See Table 3, next page.)

Despite the obvious inconsistencies of Table 3 (which does not take into consideration fluctuations in regular student enrollment, for instance, as it attempts to account for the sources of increased income), it serves to give some notion of the importance that community education programming has played in bringing Aquinas College from deep in the red back into the black. Almost half of the *additional income earned from tuition* came from these community education programs. Further, tuition income from community education programs in FY 1973, the most recent year, amounts to $453,000—a little more than 21% of the total undergraduate tuition income of the College for the year. Actually this 21% is earned at far less expense to the College than the other 79% for all the reasons stated earlier in this chapter. Hence it is income that is eminently supportive of the operating budget.

Nor is this the end of the financial impact which community education programs have had on the operations of the College.

Aquinas College, typical of most invisible colleges, had never asked the community for money except during two major capital gifts campaigns. When called upon to help the College build its present campus, the community responded rather generously, but it never had been asked to contribute to the day-to-day support of the institution. In all probability most people in the community, if they thought about it at all, assumed that Aquinas, being a Catholic institution, was being supported by the Church or at least that if Aquinas ever got into financial difficulties, it would be bailed out by the Church. Certainly there was no cause for alarm during the early 1960's as the effects of the post-War baby boom were being felt at Aquinas as elsewhere. There had even been serious talk on campus about setting a limit on enrollment so that Aquinas would not lose its natural advantages as a small intimate institution. Tuition income from the ever-increasing number of new students entering from high school coupled with the economical operation of the College (based on the contributed services of the Dominican Sisters on the faculty and administration) made the future seem secure and the likelihood of financial problems remote. As at most church-related colleges, tuition at Aquinas was kept as low as possible in order not to price a Catholic education out of the reach of its regular clientele.

For all these reasons Aquinas College had never mounted an annual fund campaign to support the operating budget and never cultivated its natural constituencies to build its endowment funds as a hedge against any

TABLE 3

Aquinas College Undergraduate Tuition Income 1968-73 (rounded to nearest 1,000)

(Annual tuition rate)	Baseline FY 1969 ($1240)	FY 1970 ($1240)	FY 1971 ($1390)	FY 1972 ($1590)	FY 1973 ($1790)	Total increases above baseline since FY 1969
Tuition income:						
Regular full-time	1137	1139	1309	1490	1645	+ 1035*
Special part-time	82	97	60	55	35	− 81**
Summer Session	32	29	26	41	52	+ 41**
New Programming						
Encore	—	23	31	52	92	+ 198**
Career Action	—	94	159	178	277	+ 708**
IDEA	—	—	—	7	15	+ 22**
Non-credit	—	5	9	12	17	+ 43**
Totals	1251	1387	1594	1835	2133	

Significant Facts:

1. The total amount of tuition income increase attributable to increases in the tuition rate is $1,035,000 (*).

2. The total amount of tuition income increase attributable to new programming is $931,000 (**). The reason that the decrease in "special part-time" tuition income is charged against the "new programming" increases is that many part-time students entered Encore and Career Action in 1969 after having taken courses previously without having matriculated. Also, the sharp upturn in summer session income in FY 1972 is the direct result of Summer School Without Walls, really a new program.

financial exigencies. It is a familiar story and in no way peculiar to Aquinas College. What followed is painful history. Clark Kerr summarizes it succinctly:

> The decade of the 1960s was characterized by the most rapid growth and development of institutions of higher education in American history. As the postwar babies reached college age, not only did the college-age population rise to unprecedented numbers, but the proportion of these young people seeking higher education also rose steadily. In the post-Sputnik era, moreover, there was a heightened appreciation of the contribution of higher education to national growth and scientific development, which encouraged rising state government appropriations, massive federal aid programs, expanded private gifts, and increased student fees. Thus institutions of higher education were equipped financially to absorb the swelling enrollment of students.
>
> But toward the end of the 1960s, signs of financial stress began to be apparent in the world of higher education, and by 1970 increasing numbers of institutions were facing financial difficulties as the flow of funds from various sources ceased to rise at the rapid rate that had been experienced from the late 1950s to about 1967. There has been a clear connection between the extraordinary growth of the first seven years of the decade and the financial stringency that began to emerge toward the end of the decade. Not only had enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels been mushrooming, but institutions had increased the quality and variety of their course offerings and had responded to the demand for greater equality of opportunity in higher education by increasing their expenditures on student aid and by developing special programs to facilitate participation in higher education of students with less than adequate preparation . . . All these factors, plus accentuated inflation in the economy, contributed to sharply increasing costs of education per student.[2]

The predicament in which Aquinas found itself at the end of the 1960's was precisely that described by Dr. Kerr in every respect save one. The "flow of funds from various sources" had never been very great at Aquinas. And there was no endowment as insurance against the worsening times.

It was abundantly clear in May 1969 that if Aquinas College were to survive, it would have to have the financial support of the community. If Foundation Proposal Prose is unlovely, what is to be said for Inaugural Address Prose? Yet the opportunity to deliver a message to so large a captive audience could not be missed. "We intend to move out to the world in order that we may serve it within the limits of our resources. We mean to accord our students and faculty the energizing touch with real life that can open their minds and hearts. *We shall repay the community for its past support, and we also expect to generate so great a debt of gratitude from the community as to command its support in the future.*" Who but a new president makes so rash a statement as that? But the statement had something to back it up, for there followed an announcement of the Encore and Career Action programs scheduled to open four months later.

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[2] Clark Kerr, Foreword to *The New Depression in Higher Education*, by Earl F. Cheit (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1971), p. vii.

Did these and subsequent programs indeed "generate so great a debt of gratitude from the community as to command its support"? Allowing for the rhetoric appropriate to the occasion–yes. Perhaps a less florid way of saying it would be that Encore and Career Action did in fact call the attention of the community to the College. People who knew the College only as a beautiful campus where their children went sledding and skiing now know it as students or at least as a place where their adult friends or relatives are students. Career Action particularly, with its strong business orientation, was soon well known to many corporate executives, thanks in no small measure to the tireless efforts of its chief proponent and prophet, Dr. Ralph Bennett. Encore with its clientele of mature women, many of whom came from the leadership class in the community, generated even more cocktail party conversation. And the Campus Health Club was attractive to many of the business and professional leaders who needed to know that Aquinas College existed.

But money is not contributed automatically, especially when there has been no established pattern for giving to an institution. In time a strong development staff was built, now led by Mr. Hugh Allen, a seasoned professional with a distinguished career of planning and fund-raising in his background, who joined the Aquinas administration in 1971. He knew precisely how to build support on the community service theme. Without him the words of the inaugural, if read today, might not have the sound of a prophecy.

From a standing start in 1969-70 the development effort produced $30,000 of unrestricted budget support from the community in the first year, $128,000 in the second year, $221,000 in the third, and $240,000 in the fourth. The number of donors, over this period, has more than tripled–from 404 in 1969-70 to 1240 in 1972-73.

Concurrently, the rise in the number and size of restricted gifts has been equally dramatic. In 1970-71, for instance, there were thirty such gifts totalling $77,000; in 1972-73 there were eighty-one totalling $337,000. At long last Aquinas College is beginning to build an endowment.

Over all, then, the Aquinas College Development Fund, made up of gifts from all sources (including the annual solicitation through the Michigan Colleges Foundation), has grown as follows:

1969-70	$294,000
1970-71	332,000
1971-72	418,000
1972-73	644,000

What part has community education played in this growth? It is impossible to say with any absolute certainty, but many of the new donors are known to have first become interested in Aquinas because of one community education program or another. It is not uncommon today to hear a leading citizen of Grand Rapids say that "Aquinas College must be supported because of its service to the community," and when that sentiment is backed up by a check, we know that our community service strategy is indeed sound.

And what difference has the coming of community education made to Aquinas College? In a word, survival. Let me be explicit.

Aquinas College suffered its first deficit in recent years in 1968-69. The loss was about $60,000. The deficit budgeted for 1969-70 was $410,000, an enormous sum even for a college three or four times the size of Aquinas College, but deemed necessary in order to build the faculty and staff needed to generate the income required to cope with "the new depression in higher education," as it was called by Earl F. Cheit. By the end of that fiscal year the projected deficit had been whittled down to $260,000, still a staggering loss, which had to be borne by the Dominican Sisters.

The deficit budgeted for 1970-71 was $299,000, but once again through strict economies and income drawn from the new adult degree programs the actual loss at the end of the year was $130,000.

Thus in three years the College had suffered losses of $450,000, and as it entered the 1971-72 fiscal year, a deficit of $125,000 was projected. Certainly it was understandable why the North Central Association visiting team, in April 1971, was anxious about the future of the institution. Yet in its report to the Commission on Colleges and Universities the team wrote: "Does this mean that Aquinas College is not fiscally viable now and for the future? No. There are a sufficient number of factors which, if managed properly, will make it possible for the College to continue to function at a satisfactory level. However, a definite plan of action is needed and the various parts of the plan which now exist must be drawn together into a coordinated whole. There are several hopeful signs."[3] A definite plan of action, of course, did exist, and the coming of Mr. Allen in the summer of 1971 put the final essential change agent into place.

When the 1971-72 fiscal year drew to a close on June 30, 1972, and the official audit of the College's books was made, it was revealed that Aquinas had ended the year with a surplus of $129,651. A miracle? Not even in a Catholic college. Miracles rarely come in $255,000 packages. What had happened was the confluence of a number of factors, "properly managed," to use the words of the North Central team.

First, there had been important savings during the year, in part from a one-year freeze on compensation imposed by the Board of Trustees at the recommendation of the administration and in part from carefully administered economies. No one was laid off, and there was no reduction in the quantity or quality of service rendered. The total number of faculty, administration, and staff held constant during the year. There was no degeneration of morale or loss of spirit in the course of the year, for there was clear understanding of the need for the actions taken.

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[3] *Report of a Visit to Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 26-27, 1971, for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools*, p. 7.

Second, a tuition increase of $200 per year (from $1390 to $1590) generated some additional income but probably at the expense of the incoming freshman class, which was the smallest (283) to enter the College since September 1964, following on the largest freshman class (333) ever to enter the College (in September 1970). Although the drop in the number of new freshmen was not unexpected, there was real concern over the long-range implications of any continued escalation of tuition.[4] The prospects for eliminating or even reducing the budgeted deficit for 1971-72 were not bright when the Board met to consider the financial condition of the College in October 1971.

Third, fund-raising under the direction of Mr. Allen became a significant factor. Total unrestricted gifts income for 1971-72, including Aquinas' membership share of funds solicited by the Michigan Colleges Foundation came to $276,000–about 12% of the total income of the College.

Fourth and finally, tuition income from the community education programs showed an impressive gain, with little or no increase in expenditures. It totaled $290,000, about 13% of the total income of the College.

Thus between community education programming (13%) and fund-raising (12%), which uses the community services of the College as the principal motif of its appeal, Aquinas College found one-fourth of its FY 1972 income.

What difference has the coming of community education made to Aquinas College? Survival–and, as time goes on, much more.[5]

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[4] It is interesting to note than even with yet another $200 increase in tuition in 1972-73 (necessitated by a decision to lift the compensation freeze), the entering freshman class numbered 316, an increase of 12%.

[5] The 1972 fiscal year was a turning point in the financial history of the College. That it was not a mere flash in the pan is evidenced by the audit for fiscal year 1973, which indicates that Aquinas had a surplus of more than $54,000 for the year just ended. Thus the College has been able to repay $184,000 of its accumulated deficit of $450,000 in two years. Barring unforeseen disasters, its future should in time be solvent and stable.

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Not By Bread Alone

But colleges do not live by bread alone. If they did, there would be an almost complete change in the cast of characters who run American higher education. Even invisible colleges, desperately as they may need the sustenance of a steady inflow of money, will waste away and die of malnutrition if there is not wholesome variety in their diet. This fact, really above all others, leads me to commend community education to the attention of those of my colleagues who have not yet discovered it. Even if community education were no better than a break-even operation, even if community education were a losing proposition and required subsidy from the institution (as long as the budget is balanced), even then community education deserves to find a place on the campus of the liberal arts college.

Such enthusiasm is apt to provoke a counterattack. Is not community education really the business of the mushrooming new community colleges? What is public higher education in business for if not to serve the taxpayers who support it? Why then should the private liberal arts college with its long and honorable tradition of giving a liberal education to those who seek it be distracted from its mission?

Community education is indeed the business of the community colleges, and within the limits of their capabilities they do a great job. Their limitations, however, are built in.

First, being two-year institutions they are limited to essentially lower-division courses—a range of offerings widely needed by the community but none the less limited by a ceiling. Community colleges can offer associate's degrees and no more; valuable as these are as rungs on the career ladder or as certificates of para-professional competence, they have limited currency in the academic as well as the real world.

Liberal arts colleges, on the other hand, have, in this credentialed society, the great benefit of having the baccalaureate degree within their gift. Furthermore they can, if they choose, institute their own associate's degree programs and compete directly with the community colleges. On the face of it, to enter such competition is rash; yet if a particular community education program needs this kind of certification by the liberal arts college and *if the program is not being offered by the community college*, why should the liberal arts college not offer the program? Which is more important: that schools observe their jurisdictional boundaries or that the people be educated?

Second, community colleges are public institutions and suffer except in extraordinary circumstances from all the limitations and disabilities suffered by organizations caught in the mesh of political bureaucracy, not to mention political manipulation. Change is difficult for the public institution for the same reasons it is difficult in independent institutions, but there are additional obstacles to change in the public institution: the decision-making process is complicated by additional levels of decision-makers, additional "safeguards" of the public interest, additional red tape; the complication of the process renders it slow, awkward, and insensitive; the thickening of the bureaucratic layers tends to smother creativity; the protection of vested interests within the bureaucratic cells militates against any kind of action that might threaten the integrity of the cells, and so on. Ultimately the whole budgetary machinery, while probably necessary to protect the taxpayer, is simply too unwieldy to be responsive to needs.

In liberal arts colleges, on the other hand, there is no excuse for a complex bureaucracy. If it exists, it should be eliminated. (That is one good reason to have a thoroughgoing self-study.)

Third, community colleges tend to be large—at least, larger than the typical invisible college many times over. Their very size renders them less maneuverable and less manageable than the smaller, more flexible private institutions. Although size may give the larger institution a greater breadth of faculty and curriculum, the smaller institution, if it employs the brokerage concept to employ resources outside its own campus, may achieve the same breadth without the immense weight of overhead the bigger institution necessarily has.

Fourth, most community colleges enjoy financial security in that they can depend on the taxpayer to support them. This kind of financial security is, of course, a luxury the invisible college does not enjoy, but from this luxury may come complacency, even laziness. If the invisible college is complacent or lazy, it will die; in all probability its death will not really be a loss to American higher education.

Well, then, it may be argued, what about the public senior colleges and universities? With their far greater resources, with their range of programs beyond the baccalaureate level, are they not really best equipped to manage the community education enterprise? Yes–if they were interested in doing so. But how many major universities, public or private, really show any interest in education below the graduate and professional and conventional baccalaureate levels? A few, to be sure, but a very few. "Let the community colleges do it," is the more likely reaction of the "visible" institutions. Community education, after all, tends to appear rather drab and pedestrian, scarcely worthy of the attention of a school seeking prestige and a leg up on the totem pole of the higher education establishment.

Who then takes the responsibility for community education? The community colleges, of course, carry a heavy share of the burden as they were intended to do, but for all the reasons indicated above they do not and cannot do all the jobs that need to be done. The big universities and senior colleges pay relatively little attention to it. This leaves a vacuum among the educational needs of America in the 1970's–and who would deny that these needs grow greater day by day as life grows more complex and demanding? Who will fill that vacuum?

The invisible colleges are in a highly advantageous position to move in to fill this vacuum. If they do so, however, only out of a sense of dire institutional need or out of a sense of inheriting by default what others have neglected to do, they will have missed the point entirely.

Community education is a noble enterprise. It is a creative reponse to the learning needs of people that finds its justification not in the fact that it has been established by custom but in the aspiration of human beings seeking a better way to cope with their predicament in an uncertain world.

Community education, as a function of the invisible liberal arts college, can give that institution a new reason to exist, a new mission to perform, a new importance on the educational scene–a new "visibility," if you will.

Even at the risk of sounding repetitive, let us run down the list of non-economic benefits the invisible college and its constituencies stand to gain by serious, systematic entry into the field of community education.

First, the morale of the institution will be raised substantially. Faculty will not only profit from additional compensation but they will discover, if they have never been exposed to older students before, the psychic rewards of teaching adults, the exhilaration of teaching students whose motivation is high and dedication strong. The students themselves–these special new students–will be going through a process of self-discovery and self-renewal that has to be observed to be appreciated; when the process occurs (and it becomes a commonplace occurrence), it has a regenerative effect on faculty and stimulative effect on the regular students. The regular students of the College, instead of losing some of the attention of the faculty and administration through dilution, will in fact gain a major benefit through personal contact with fellow-learners perhaps twenty years their seniors. What better bridge over the generation gap than a learning experience shared by young people and more mature people joined together as peers? Administrators will find new challenges to their skills in accommodating students with an age range of thirty to forty years instead of five or six. The adult constituencies of the institution will find a new interest in the college by the very presence of students who are their contemporaries. Trustees, friends, supporters, and alumni may find the college campus a less alien world than the conventional campus populated almost exclusively by the Now Generation.

Second, reciprocal enrichment by the regular faculty and the adjunct faculty has already been commented upon at some length (in Chapter 5, above).

Third, the service which the invisible college can render to the community is limited only by the energy and the imagination of the College's personnel. And if the college is church-related, as most invisible colleges are, the opportunity for broadening the range of service to more of the People of God can only be an augmentation of the college's Christian reason for being.

Fourth, the ability of the invisible college to compete on a realistic basis with more prestigious institutions can lift it from the class of Twentieth-Century anachronism, to which it has been prematurely relegated, to a new class of institution that looks to the Twenty-first Century: *the independent community liberal arts college.*

Where to begin? With a foundation grant, of course.

Of course *not!*

One of the great troubles with the innovative process in American higher education is the stereotype of how it occurs. We see an educator on horseback on the road to Damascus. Suddenly a bolt of creative lightning strikes the rider, there is a clap of thunder, and when the rider awakes, he or she is discovered wallowing on the ground in a patch of Ford Foundation money.

Well, maybe it is that way for the jockeys wearing the colors of a select few prestigious collegiate stables, which could not be invisible if they tried, but that is not the way it is where we ride. On our particular road to Damascus one can grow old waiting for lightning to strike—and if it did strike, it would probably be lethal.

Where to begin? With one person in an invisible college who has an awareness of the potentialities of community education and the influence within his or her institution to make it happen. *One believer is all it takes.*

Epilogue

The previous text was written seven years ago. Although *Survival Kit* closed on a note of optimism, it was not entirely clear at that point what the long-term future held for Aquinas College. Would the College enjoy a significant survival? In this closing section, we consider the events and forces that continue to shape Aquinas as the 1970s draw to a close. Some of the new programs described in *Survival Kit* have prospered; others have faded. The school has taken several new initiatives. Aquinas did survive the 1970s and appears to be in a strong position to confront the 1980s with equal success.

Perhaps the strongest affirmation of the Aquinas approach to survival is the continuing belief of the school's key leaders that the path they followed was right for the College and continues to offer promise. This conviction inheres in their current statements and program planning. Aquinas still possesses an innovative spirit; it seeks to identify and respond to needs in its community while continuing in its liberal-arts tradition. Aquinas is fulfilling both its original mission as a Catholic liberal-arts college and its new mission as an independent, community-based liberal-arts school. Indeed, it is achieving a growing integration of what might have become two distinct identities.

The Mission of Aquinas College

As stated in a 1977 self-study prepared for a North Central Association accreditation visit, "the mission of Aquinas College is to provide for a liberal-arts education with a career orientation in a Catholic, Christian context to all students capable of profiting from such an education regardless of their sex, age, religion, ethnic, or racial background." The self-study continues by listing three major functions of the College:

- to provide a sound liberal-arts undergraduate education that completes and rounds out the secondary education experience and equips young people for participation in adult life

- to serve the educational needs of the adult community through a variety of educational programs that meet their personal, cultural, and professional needs
- to serve the people of God through a graduate program in religious studies

These short statements about role and mission have guided a number of academic and financial planning decisions at Aquinas College.

Any assessment of the viability of an institution's role and mission must consider its responsiveness to changing forces in the College's external and internal environments. To help determine whether the changed mission of Aquinas College has served it well over the past decade, these forces will be examined.

Recent External Factors Facing Aquinas College

No college can operate independent of outside influences. Even the more prestigious schools must consider aggregate enrollment trends, potential competition from other providers of postsecondary education services, developments in the immediate community, and changes in the sponsorship relationship, whether it be with a church or a government agency. In this section, we consider a number of factors that Aquinas College has faced during the 1970s. In particular, we will review enrollment trends, both in Michigan and for private colleges generally; the development of other institutions in the Grand Rapids area; demographic and economic stability in the Grand Rapids community; and trends in the Catholic church in America.

The past decade has witnessed a tremendous enrollment growth in American higher education. In a recent 10-year period, aggregate enrollment for all institutions grew more than 60 percent. Most of this growth, however, took place in the public sector; in the same period, the enrollment increase for private institutions was less than 20 percent. In Michigan, the comparison between sectors was even more extreme. While overall enrollment in Michigan education fell only slightly short of the national growth rate, private institutions in Michigan actually experienced a drop in enrollment. Full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrollment growth at Aquinas of 38 percent over a similar period attests to the viability of the College's mission in the academic marketplace.

This enrollment growth, which occurred primarily in continuing-education programs, is even more significant when one considers the development of state-supported institutions in the Grand Rapids area. Grand Rapids Junior College has continued to grow as a community-based institution and responds to a wider array of community needs. Aquinas College and Grand Rapids Junior College have experienced minimal competition for the same students; Aquinas's specific contribution is baccalaureate and graduate-level continuing-education services. The growing interest of the Grand Valley State Colleges in providing continuing-education services, however, has created increased competition for Aquinas College. But even with its higher tuition charges, Aquinas has managed to hold its ground and even continue to grow. Although many reasons might be offered for its success in the face of growing competition, the key reason seems to carry over from Aquinas's heritage as a small liberal-arts school with a concern for student development that is expressed through an extensive counseling program for both continuing-education and regular students.

The reputation of the continuing-education credit program at Aquinas has developed to such an extent that the College now competes in other geographic areas. In recent years, the school has successfully taken its Career Action Program to Muskegon and Lansing and its Master of Management Program to Lansing (next door to Michigan State University).

The Grand Rapids community has enjoyed relative stability over the past decade. With its more diversified industrial base, the city has not experienced the extreme economic fluctuations that have plagued other Michigan communities. Population in the metropolitan area has increased slightly, due mostly to expansion of existing industry rather than the influx of new employers. While this stability has brought no external community crisis to threaten Aquinas's survival, however, it has not been sufficient to ensure the success of a nearby institution. But for Aquinas, it has contributed to the demonstrated vitality of the College's mission.

The attitude of the American Catholic community toward its church—and, in turn, toward Catholic higher education—has continued to change. One result of the Second Vatican Council was the increased responsibility of the laity within the church. This and other changes have led to turmoil and shifting attitudes. Yet, throughout this traumatic period, Aquinas has remained essentially a Catholic institution of higher learning. Despite a slight drop in the percentage of students who identify themselves as Catholic, this group still comprises a vast majority (75 percent). Similarly, despite a decrease in the number of religious-order faculty during this period, over two-thirds of the respondents on a religious-attitudes survey conducted by the College continued to view Aquinas as a Catholic community.

The growing shortage of available religious personnel has affected not only staffing but also program focus at Aquinas. The College has initiated a noncredit program in liturgy and music aimed at preparing the laity to take a more active role in the church. In this way, the school has actually expanded its role as a Catholic institution.

The Development of Aquinas College During the 1970s

The previously described external trends circumscribe the development of Aquinas College during the 1970s. Internally, the decade brought shifting enrollment patterns; strengthened financial conditions; a stronger, more flexible faculty; and stability in executive leadership. It saw a reorientation of the traditional liberal-arts undergraduate program; continued development of some continuing-education programs and discontinuance of others; creation of other programs and services; and the initiation of a more formal approach to long-range planning. Aquinas College enters the 1980s as a significantly stronger institution than it has been during the past decade.

FTE enrollment of Aquinas College has grown by over one-third during the past decade. The College continued to attract 85 to 90 percent of its students from Michigan, but the quality of its entering freshman class, as measured by class rank in high school, has increased. These figures, however, mask significant changes that have occurred at Aquinas. For instance, while the number of first-time-in-college freshmen is 10 percent greater than in 1969, the proportion of headcount students in the age category of 18 to 22 years has dropped from 80 percent to less than half of the student body. The increase in total enrollment is explained by the success of the continuing-education programs introduced by the College (many of which are described in *Survival Kit*). The College enrolls about 1,500 part-time adult students, a group with a median age in the 30s. These new students have led to a broadening of the academic enterprise. While 86 percent of the students majored in traditional liberal-arts programs a decade ago, the proportion has now dropped to only slightly more than one-half of the student body. Speculation that these two broad groups of students would tend to divide Aquinas into two colleges has been proved wrong; in many ways, the two programs now serve to enrich one another. In fact, 87 percent of the older students polled in a recent survey indicated that they enjoy having students of traditional college age in their classes.

The composition of the faculty has also changed during this period. In FTE terms, the number of faculty has increased only slightly. As a result, the school has increased its student-faculty ratio from 15:1 to a more economical 19:1. However, the number of full-time faculty has decreased by more than 20 percent, and the part-time faculty has more than doubled. During this same period, the percentage of faculty holding a Ph.D. or equivalent has also nearly doubled. Priests and sisters constitute only about 30 percent of the faculty.

The central administrative body, on the other hand, has not experienced as much change during the past decade. The tenth anniversary of President Hruby's installation was recently celebrated. The Business Affairs Office remains in the hands of John O'Connor. The Student Affairs area is led by an eight-year veteran, James Schultz, and continuing-education activities are still coordinated by Paul Nelson. Lee Jacokes, who directed the self-study and then served as registrar and institutional research officer, continues to provide leadership to the College in his capacity as head of the new Master of Management Program. Sister Barbara Hansen, a faculty member on sabbatical during the self-study, assumed responsibilities as chief academic officer in 1975. Tom Monaghan, vice president for development, is a relative newcomer in the central administration, having come to Aquinas three years ago.

The College's curriculum has seen a number of changes over the past decade. Requirements in the regular programs were liberalized from a set of strictly prescribed liberal-arts core requirements to about 50 semester hours chosen from five areas: language and communication, aesthetics, perspectives, social science, and natural science and mathematics. Exceptional students with well-defined academic goals and objectives have been given the option of completing the core requirements by adopting a contractual plan that requires specific liberal-education courses. The number of liberal-arts major and minor fields of study has been reduced by two, while the professional areas of specialization now number eight: accounting, business, education, pre-engineering, pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-veterinary, and medical technology.

The Continuing Education Program continues to grow and prosper. It is designed to offer valid educational experiences that meet the needs and interests of identifiable segments of the adult population. Each program is designed with a respect for the maturity, motivation, and experience of the adult student. Program design, time format, and schedule recognize the multiple commitments of the adult student to family, career, and community. At present, Aquinas offers three degree-completion credit programs: Career Action, Encore, and Directed Study.[1] These programs, described in *Survival Kit* in some detail, have remained essentially the same since their inception. Collectively, they account for over 500 graduates of Aquinas

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[1] The Directed Study Program is essentially the IDEA program described in *Survival Kit*—a combination of weekend classes once a month and independent study between meetings.

College in recent years and account for a substantial portion of the school's current total enrollment. They have also been well received by the adult students. Only 3 percent rate the quality of instruction they have received at Aquinas as fair or poor; two-thirds evaluate their program as having very high or superior quality. Only one student in over 500 surveyed thus far has stated that he would not recommend Aquinas to a friend. On the College and University Environment Scale (CUES), continuing-education students have rated both Quality of Instruction and Faculty-Student Relationships at the 98th percentile and Scholarship at the 91st.

The Master of Management Program, a new credit program designed with an adult-education philosophy, received approval during regional accreditation in 1977. This program was designed in consultation with area employers who indicated their dissatisfaction with available MBA programs that had a quantitative focus. Instead, they expressed a preference for a program that would focus on the development of communications and human-relations skills—an approach that builds from the liberal-arts tradition. In its short existence, the new Master of Management Program has already attracted 400 students.

Noncredit continuing-education programs attract another 750 adults. The most prominent among these is Emeritus College, a program started in 1975 with a grant from the Michigan Endowment for the Humanities. Through this program, seminars are offered to retired and soon-to-be-retired people and conducted on the campus as well as in churches and retirement homes. The directors of the program are themselves retired. Typical of the topics for seven-week seminars are current political and social realities, philosophical implications of a market society, the transcendent factor in human society, artistry, world religions, and reading for enjoyment.

Some of the continuing-education programs initiated during self-study a decade ago have fulfilled their original purpose and have since been discontinued. For instance, the campus health club, which attracted local businessmen to the College's gymnasium facilities, eventually lost out to new commercial competition. Similarly, the program of Saturday classes for art and science seniors in high school was discontinued after several years. The College does not consider these experiences to be failures, however, and remains proud to have served a community need at a particular time.

With funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Aquinas has focused attention on its immediate neighborhood, an area of Grand Rapids known as Eastown. The College assisted in the formation of the Eastown Community Association. The purpose of the Association is to improve the quality of life in Eastown, and its membership includes some Aquinas faculty and students who live in the area. The College offers the Association its resources as an educational and research institution and encourages its faculty and students to become involved. Services provided by the Eastown Community Association include a community meeting place, a neighborhood newspaper, a food cooperative, a tenant-landlord service, activities for senior citizens, and more active representation in city government affairs. The Association has provided the context for an urban-studies course and a number of student research projects.

With all of the changes in the composition of the student body, the faculty, and the curriculum, the institutional climate has also seen change. Periodically over the past 10 years, CUES has been administered to students, faculty, and administrators to assess the College's climate. During a recent nine-year period, student responses showed positive changes of 10 percentage points or more on five of the seven CUES scales. The largest increases were seen in awareness (+ 53 percentage points), propriety (+ 44 percentage points), scholarship (+ 32 percentage points), and campus morale (+ 27 percentage points). Generally, faculty and administrators also perceive change, though to a much lower degree. The most recent administration of the CUES questionnaire also included a sample of continuing-education students. This group reported an even more favorable environment than did on-campus students and faculty.

During this period of extensive staff and program development, the College's financial position has also been greatly strengthened. After a number of years of operating deficits in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the College has experienced a surplus in all but one of the recent years; it has also managed to eliminate virtually all debt. Aquinas College achieved this position through a combination of stronger fiscal management, better deployment of its personnel resources, increased tuition, a more active program of attracting grant support, and a more vigorous development program. The continuing-education programs have played an important part in this improvement. They continue to provide important revenue to the College in exchange for only a marginal increase in costs. An unexpected by-product of this community programming has been greater financial support from individuals and employers in the community. A number of recent gifts can be traced to the College's growing reputation for service to the Grand Rapids area.

Current Planning Activity

Long-range planning began as a formal process at Aquinas College in 1973; it was not until then that the College was seen to have a future secure enough to plan for. The long-range planning process has gone through two phases. During the first three years, a large and cumbersome—yet broadly representative—planning team developed a statement of goals and objectives. After three complete cycles of planning, it became clear that if planning was to move the College into action, the Long-Range Planning Group had to be streamlined and direct its attention to the budget-making process as well as planning. So a newly constituted Long-Range Planning Group, chaired by the president and consisting of senior administrators and faculty, assumed responsibilities. This group spends six to eight hours each month working together under the College's rolling four-year planning cycle.

One of the first actions of the reconstituted Long-Range Planning Group was to rework the goals and objectives created by the first group; a schematic reduction of the 15 goals to five groups of goals was accomplished. These groups concern (1) the religious nature of the College, (2) justice at the College, (3) the educational nature of the College, (4) quality of the institution, and (5) sustenance. Table 1 shows the reorganized goals.

With the newly prioritized goals and objectives as its agenda, the new Long-Range Planning Group designed a budget for FY 1978 in the context of a two-year retrenchment plan following expansion under a four-year $1,000,000 Title III (AIDP) grant. Several programs begun with short-term grant money have now been integrated with ongoing programs supported by institutional funds. The Long-Range Planning Group also planned the systematic consolidation and integration of administrative functions (with corresponding plans for reallocating scarce space in the Administration Building) and amended the College's organizational structure to accommodate the new realities. More recently, its attention has been focused on a number of strategies to improve the institution.

TABLE I

Goals of Aquinas College

GROUP I: *Religious Nature of Aquinas College*

Goal 1: The Dominican identity of the College is essential; it cannot be realized without achieving Goal 2.
Goal 2: The Catholic identity of the College depends not only on the Goal 2 statement but on Goals 9, 10, 13, and 15.

Together Goals 1 and 2 have the highest priority inasmuch as they have to do with the essential identity of the institution.

GROUP II: *Justice at Aquinas College*

Goal 9: Relationship with the neighborhood
Goal 10: Programming for the disadvantaged
Goal 13: Minorities at Aquinas
Goal 15: Justice for all

Together Goals 9, 10, 13, and 15 are the platform on which the social justice structure of the College is built; as such they support Group I Goals and actualize them.

GROUP III: *Educational Nature of the College*

Goal 4: Liberal arts with career orientation are the heart of the matter.
Goal 5: Goal 4 cannot be achieved without the full integration of programs.

Together Goals 4 and 5 have the highest priority from the operational standpoint.

GROUP IV: *Quality of the Institution*

Goal 3: Teaching and Learning
Goal 7: Student Personnel Services
Goal 8: Faculty and Staff Development

Together Goals 3, 7, and 8 must be achieved if Aquinas College is to be an institution of high quality. Survival without quality may be possible, but is it worth the sacrifice? The answer to that question establishes the priority of Group III Goals.

GROUP V: *Sustenance*

Goal 11: The Campus
Goal 6: Finances

Without a place to do business and financial resources with which to do it, there is no Aquinas College.

NOTE: Goal 12 (limiting attrition) is achieved by achieving the others; Goal 14 called for a prioritization of the original set of goals and objectives.

Implications

Survival Kit, viewed in light of the information provided in this epilogue, has a number of implications for the institutional planner and researcher. *Survival Kit* contains many valuable ideas whose long-term utility has been confirmed for the planner concerned with institutional survival. The ideas presented so eloquently by President Hruby also provide the materials for a framework by which researchers may compare their findings among institutions. This framework (which is developed more fully in the forthcoming NCHEMS publication *Mission Review: Foundation for Strategic Planning*) will also serve to organize several closing observations.

Determining institutional readiness. Aquinas College certainly was ready for a major review of its mission, role, and scope when Norbert Hruby assumed the presidency in 1969. The College had experienced several years of decline in its enrollment of full-time students. As a result, it had also experienced several years of operating deficits of such magnitude that the continuance of Aquinas was threatened. Thus President Hruby "accepted the presidency of Aquinas College on condition that the College enter immediately upon an intensive, inductive institutional self-study."

Clarifying specific uses. Given the situation facing the College in 1969, the most significant purpose for the mission self-study was institutional survival. The self-study resulted in new ideas for institutional development. However, the overall process became a vehicle for implementation of a number of new programs and development of an accreditation report. Delineation of these interrelated uses helped to provide focus for the overall effort.

Organizing for planning. The Aquinas College self-study was well organized. There was an executive committee, a staff director, five study groups, and an external advisory panel. Scheduled activities were clearly identified at the outset to occur in three phases. This degree of organization and structure enabled all those involved to understand what the process was, where it was heading, and what effect it would have on the future of the College.

Determining participation. Broad participation was a key to the success of the Aquinas College mission, role, and scope planning activity. Every faculty member was assigned to one of the five study groups. Additionally, each group had three student members. Participation was more than token—it was active. Study-group members visited other campuses and took part in campus-wide retreats to compare recommendations.

Providing analytical support. Effective analysis also was an important ingredient in the success of the Aquinas College self-study. Much of the analysis was technically unsophisticated but nonetheless highly effective. The sorting of 4,500 questions on 3X5 cards and visits to 28 other campuses are examples of this type of effective analysis. President Hruby's case history is replete with examples of ad hoc analyses of employer needs and institutional capabilities. It illustrates an awareness of shifting demographic and social trends in the external environment. An important lesson in the Aquinas experience is that information does not have to come from sophisticated simulation models to be valuable in a mission, role, and scope planning effort.

Communicating progress and results. The planning effort that resulted in a redirection of the mission of Aquinas College benefited from excellent communications in both the self-study and implementation phases. Largely because of earlier decisions about how to organize and who should participate, internal communications during the self-study phase were highly effective. Virtually everyone knew what was happening and why. Thus a fairly significant change in the institution's mission could be proposed and implemented with a minimal amount of disruption. Even as steps were taken to implement the new continuing-education mission, communications remained important. When new programs were launched, brochures, direct mailings, civic speaking, and interviews in the newspapers and on radio and television were important channels. This communication activity enabled Aquinas College to become better known within its own geographic community, an important first step in being recognized as a valuable continuing-education resource for the community.

Maintaining viability. The 10 years that have elapsed since the initial self-study efforts demonstrate that procedures enabling Aquinas College to maintain a viable mission have now become rooted. As mentioned previously, several of the new programs described in *Survival Kit* were dropped when they no longer served community needs. Others were modified to stay in tune with shifts in community interest. In some cases, new programs were developed as circumstances dictated. Yet despite the many programming changes at Aquinas College, the results of a series of attitudinal studies conducted throughout the period suggest that the sense of mission at Aquinas has become stronger and more focused. It seems fair, indeed, to state that the general perception is now accurately reflected in the College's formal statement of mission:

> to provide for a liberal arts education with a career orientation in a Catholic, Christian context to all students capable of profiting from such an education regardless of their sex, age, religion, ethnic, or racial background.

SHAW

The Emeritus College at Aquinas gives senior citizens an opportunity to pursue their intellectual interests.